

FEAST OF TABERNACLES—SUKKOT

From Olive Press Publishers [*MESSIANIC JUDAISM CLASS Teacher Book by Rabbi Jim Appel*](#)

Leviticus 23:33-44 ADONAI said to Moshe, 34 "Tell the people of Isra'el, 'On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the feast of Sukkot for seven days to ADONAI. 35 On the first day there is to be a holy convocation; do not do any kind of ordinary work. 36 For seven days you are to bring an offering made by fire to ADONAI; on the eighth day you are to have a holy convocation and bring an offering made by fire to ADONAI; it is a day of public assembly; do not do any kind of ordinary work. 39 ... when you have gathered the produce of the land, you are to observe the festival of ADONAI seven days; the first day is to be a complete rest and the eighth day is to be a complete rest. 40 On the first day you are to take choice fruit, palm fronds, thick branches and river-willows, and celebrate in the presence of ADONAI your God for seven days. 41 ... it is a permanent regulation, generation after generation; ... 42 You are to live in sukkot for seven days; every citizen of Isra'el is to live in a sukkah, 43 so that generation after generation of you will know that I made the people of Isra'el live in sukkot when I brought them out of the land of Egypt; I am ADONAI your God."

74. What does Sukkot mean?

Tabernacles or booths. Sukkot is plural. Sukkah is singular.

75. What are some English names for this holiday?

Feast of Tabernacles, Feast of Booths, Feast of Ingathering.

76. How do we celebrate Sukkot?

It's eight days of celebration on the 15th day of the 7th month for seven days (closing with completion of Torah reading cycle: Simcha Torah).

The first and last days are Shabbat days.

It's a harvest feast: the fruit harvest, the final harvest of the year.

We rejoice with waving of branches and fruit of trees—
all in gratitude for good harvest.

We hold a ceremony in the sukkah, with an outside oneg.

We live in booths (sukkah/sukkot).

We hold a Torah scroll processional.

We have a water drawing ceremony (See question #79)

77. What meaning do these observations have?

Several meanings to us on several levels as follows:

A. Harvest Festival

We are commanded to rejoice (celebrate) at this final, fruit harvest. (See above.)

Leviticus 23:40 (above) speaks of waving the branches.

In Deuteronomy 16, it adds "with our families."

It is Z'man Simkhatenu (The Time of Our Rejoicing) for the harvest.

This holiday is the origin of America's Thanksgiving Day.

B. Z'man Simkhatenu (The Time of Our Rejoicing)

Rejoicing for the harvest (as mentioned above).

Rejoicing for the atonement of Yom Kippur.

We rejoice for the atonement of our Messiah.

C. Living in Booths or Sukkot —Temporary Dwellings

It commemorates the wandering in the desert as a stage in our national deliverance.

The Israelites dwelt in sukkot (booths, tents, temporary dwellings). **(Describe the Sukkah.)**

The sukkah (the temporary dwelling) causes us to recognize we are just pilgrims here on earth.

The sukkah is purposely a flimsy structure

It is not allowed to be made sturdy to show our dependence on God's provision.

The Israelites should have perished in the desert by all natural laws.
But they were fed by manna, shaded by cloud, warmed by the fire pillar, got water from rocks, and their sandals and clothes lasted
Traditionally: the sukkah has a holey roof to see through to the glory of God in the stars and to make us recognize our dependence on Him.
We build them in our back yards.
The sukkah also shows us the temporary nature of our lives.
We all live in a sukkah of flesh—a temporary structure, our bodies.
The older we are, the more we think about how temporary our time on earth is.

D. Future Messianic prophetic meaning

78. What future event is associated with this holiday?

Sukkot looks forward to the future Millennial Age
when God will dwell among His people
in His Manifest Presence or Sh'khinah Glory

Zechariah describes a future siege and battle at Yerushalayim (Jerusalem).

Zechariah 14:3 Then ADONAI will go out and fight against those nations, fighting as on a day of battle.

79. Who will defend Yerushalayim (Jerusalem)?

The Lord Himself will defend His city.

Zechariah 14:9 Then ADONAI will be king over the whole world. On that day ADONAI will be the only one, and his name will be the only name.

80. What is this verse saying?

Adonai will rule in a physical manifestation from Yerushalayim.

Zechariah 14:16-17 Finally, everyone remaining from all the nations that came to attack Yerushalayim will go up every year to worship the king, ADONAI-Tzva'ot (Lord of Hosts), and to keep the festival of Sukkot. 17 If any of the families of the earth does not go up to Yerushalayim to worship the king, ADONAI-Tzva'ot, no rain will fall on them.

81. What can we ascertain from this that will happen in the Millennial Kingdom?

All nations will be required to go to Yerushalayim and celebrate Sukkot.

Jerusalem will be the focal point. It will be a period of world peace because the Messiah Yeshua will reign from Yerushalayim.

It will begin on Sukkot, the Moad (Appointed Time) that speaks of the manifest Presence of God with us on Earth

This Millennial Kingdom is a source of great hope to us.

Two Fascinating Connections to Yeshua Coming to Earth the First Time

Since Sukkot is a Moad (Appointed Time) which commemorates the manifest presence of God dwelling with His people, there should be some connection with the manifest presence appearing in the form of Yeshua. There are two fascinating connections.

First Connection: A Past Messianic Prophetic Meaning

This is a very amazing connection, which has been locked as a riddle in the Scriptures.

82. What event in Yeshua's life is associated with this holiday?

It has to do with His birthday.

December 25th was adopted as His birthday in 4th century.

It was a replacement for Chanukkah.

Pagans celebrated the return of the sun after the winter solstice.

Looking at Zechariah's time serving as priest in Luke 1, we can date Yeshua's birth directly from the Scriptures to the 7th month.

Since all the other great Messianic events happened on Moadim (Appointed Times) of the Lord, it follows logic that His birth would also!

83. What Holy Day in the seventh month would have been appropriate for the day of His birth?

Sukkot.

84. Why?

He came to dwell temporarily with us on the earth.

85. Why else?

His circumcision would have been on the Eighth Day of Assembly.

So His circumcision would have been on a Moad (Appointed Time), too!!

Second Connection: A Future Messianic Prophetic Meaning

John 7:2,10 But the festival of Sukkot in Y'hudah (Judah) was near... 10 But after his brothers had gone up to the festival, he too went up, not publicly but in secret.

86. What did Yeshua do on Sukkot?

He went to Jerusalem to celebrate as commanded in Scripture.

87. How was the last day of Sukkot celebrated in the time of the Temple?

With a water-drawing ceremony.

Knowledge of this is gleaned from existing traditions in Judaism today.

The Water Drawing Ceremony

It's in the Talmud (Sukkah 51a-b). **Explain the Talmud.**

Priest drew water from the pool of Siloam on the first day of Sukkot.

It was a dancing, singing processional, singing Psalm 113-118.

It lasted seven days, going once around the altar each day.

On the eighth day, they chanted Hoshiana Rabbah in seven processions.

A processional is still done in synagogues today, not with water but with the Torah scroll.

On the eighth day, they also poured water on the altar.

This was called Simcha Bet Ha-sho-evah (the Rejoicing of the House of Drawing Water)

Modern prayers are in the Siddur (prayer book).

Hoshiana Rabbah

When chanting Hoshiana, Israel is calling out for the salvation only the Messiah can bring.

This is called the Hoshiana service. It's the same word we sing: Hosanna.

Hoshiana (also spelled Hoshana) means "Please Save us."

Prayer Titles:

Please save us for Your sake our God, etc.

Please save us for the sake of your truth, covenant, greatness, splendor, etc.

"Please save us!" led to this last day being called Hoshana Rabbah, the Great Hosanna.

Springs of Salvation

The prayers were for more than just rain.

Rabbis associated this Water Drawing Ceremony with Isaiah 12:3 *"Then you will joyfully draw water from the springs of salvation."* They sang in Hebrew: U-shav-tem mayim besasone me-ma-ay-nay ha Yeshua.

Yeshua – means salvation, so they were actually calling on His name in this song.

Messianic redemption was associated with the prayers for rain, when the Holy Spirit would be poured out like water (Talmud Sukkot 55).

The ceremony was for more than physical water.

It was for an outpouring of the Ruakh HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) on the people of Israel.

The Ruakh HaKodesh would be poured out like water.

John 7:37 Now on the last day of the festival, Hoshana Rabbah, Yeshua stood...

(On the eighth day we just learned about, during the prayers for salvation and rain which were associated with the coming of the Messiah and the pouring out of the Ruakh HaKodesh.)

John 7:37 (cont.)... and cried out, "If anyone is thirsty, let him keep coming to me and drinking!"

88. What did Yeshua declare for all to hear on this holiday?

"If anyone is thirsty, let him keep coming to Me and drinking!"

89. What was Yeshua saying and why did He choose to say it on Sukkot?

I am the rain.

I am the water of salvation.

I am the one who will satisfy your thirst for God.

I am the Messiah.

I am the one who saves.

If you want to be in God's presence like our forefathers in the desert who dwelt in Sukkot, come into My presence.

I am the manifest presence of God Himself come among men tabernacling with them.

What incredible timing! What power!

John 7:38 Whoever puts his trust in me, as the Scripture says, rivers of living water will flow from his inmost being!"

You'll receive more than natural water—Living Water.

Your spiritual thirst for the presence of God in your life will be satisfied.

Not only will you drink of the water of salvation,

you'll receive so much of it that it will be like a river flowing out of you.

John 7:39 (Now he said this about the Spirit, whom those who trusted in him were to receive later—the Spirit had

not yet been given, because Yeshua had not yet been glorified.)

The stream of Living Water represents the Ruakh HaKodesh,
and rivers of God's love to other people.

In speaking to the Samaritan women at Jacob's well in Samaria, He said:

John 4:14 ...the water I give him will become a spring of water inside him, welling up into eternal life!"

Yeshua was showing us that salvation, knowing Him, is like a well.

You can dip your bucket down into it and draw out the Living Water.

On Sukkot, Yeshua was telling us being filled with the Ruakh HaKodesh is very different:

Rivers of Living Water will flow out of you to others.

He didn't say

a well, which you have to dip down into to bring the water up from.

He didn't say

a brook, or creek, or run, or stream.

Those are all small.

He said river.

Describe large rivers: Genesee, Niagara, St. Lawrence, Hudson, Ohio, Mississippi, etc.

90. Why a river?

Rivers have awesome power. This describes the power of God's Spirit.

Rivers are harnessed for electricity.

Rivers change landscapes.

A river moves you if you get out into it.

91. Why plural as in "rivers"?

Flows to multiple others simultaneously.

92. So, if we're supposed to have "*rivers of living water flow from our inmost beings*", how do we keep them flowing?

We can't block them up. We have to let them flow out.

93. How do we let the rivers flow out?

Through outreach, good works, love, prayer, praise.

94. What else is needed to keep them flowing out?

We have to let them flow in.

95. How do we let them in?

Through worship, the Word, teaching, fellowship, prayer.

Now we are back to:

96. How we observe this Moad (Appointed Time) today.

We give thanks for the water we have received this year.

Without it our land would be destitute.

We pray for rain for the coming year.

On Rosh Hashanah we asked for repentance.

On Yom Kippur we repented and asked to be cleansed.

Sukkot is a time for asking and receiving the Ruakh HaKodesh.

John 7:37 "If anyone is thirsty, let him keep coming to me and drinking!"

97. Does being filled with the Ruakh HaKodesh happen just once and then we're filled forever?

We need to keep on being filled.

SIMCHA TORAH (Rejoicing in the Torah)

98. What does this day celebrate?

The Torah, God's Word.

The completion of the reading cycle.

99. How do we celebrate?

We celebrate with a processional with the Torah, singing and dancing to honor the Living Word!

100. When do we celebrate it?

We celebrate Simcha Torah on the Shabbat after Sukkot is over not on the day after the last day of Sukkot because that can fall on a weekday when not many will come & we have decided Simcha Torah should be important enough to dedicate a Shabbat to it.

Nehemiah 8:18 Also they read every day, from the first day until the last day, in the scroll of the Torah of God. They kept the feast for seven days; then on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the rule.

101. What is the origin of Simcha Torah?

It is from this passage that tells how the returned exiles kept Sukkot.

The Torah reading cycle starts on Sukkot because of this passage in Nehemiah.

102. What is the significance of this holiday?

It fits with God's timing and balance.

Sukkot is all about water, which represents the Spirit.

But, remember the purpose of the water:

Not just to make the grass green,

but to enable the growth of solid food.

We need both water and food in our physical diet.

The Bible is like solid food.

Simcha Torah emphasizes the Bible.

It comes just after Sukkot which emphasized the Spirit.

103. What is the importance of Simcha Torah?

It celebrates Yeshua, the Living Word being among us.

Yeshua Himself is the Living Word.

John 1:14 The Word became a human being and lived with us, and we saw his Sh'khinah, the Sh'khinah of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.

104. What is the descriptor of the Word that the Scripture uses about itself?

Yeshua, the Word, became flesh.

Rabbi Jim's testimony:

In 1977 the Word came alive for me. I expected the Bible to be a mystical instruction book like books of Hinduism. I never expected it would be a biography of a Jewish man. As I read it, I fell in love with the subject of this biography, the Jewish Messiah, and I wanted to be one of His followers.

As I read the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew, I realized I fell far short of His standard for being a "good person." I saw that I was guilty of many of the things He called sin. I knelt on the floor and confessed my sins. He met me there powerfully.

I encountered Yeshua that day and came to know Him as the Living Word, and He remains alive to me today in His Living Word.

Deuteronomy 16:16 Three times a year all your men are to appear in the presence of ADONAI your God in the place which he will choose—at the festival of matzah, at the festival of Shavu'ot and at the festival of Sukkot.

105. Which holidays are the three pilgrimage holidays?

Pesakh, Shavuot, and Sukkot. Though modern Jews might say they are Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah, and Pesakh.

106. What is the significance of this?

People were in Jerusalem to observe first hand when the Messianic fulfillments were happening:

Yeshua's birth and circumcision.

Yeshua's death and Resurrection.

The pouring out of the Ruakh HaKodesh.