



Message for 10-17-18
Sukkot – Feast of Booths or Tabernacles
Leviticus 23:33-36,
Numbers 29:12
Zechariah 14:1-21
Revelation 7:1-10

Sukkot, the time of our gladness, is the third in the cycle of pilgrimage festivals. On Passover we celebrate our redemption from Egypt and our freedom from physical bondage. Shavuot commemorates the Giving of the Torah, whereby we gained our spiritual freedom by learning what Yah considered to be sin. With Sukkot, the cycle reaches its culmination in an exhilarating outburst of joy and wealth of symbols that evoke memories of divine protection in the past, that lift our present to a higher spiritual plateau, and that point the way to the Messianic future.

Leviticus 23:33-36

33: The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: **34:** Speak to the Children of Israel, saying: On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the Festival of Sukkot, a seven-day period for the LORD. **35:** On the first day is a holy convocation, you shall not do any laborious work. **36:** For a seven-day period you shall offer a fire offering to the LORD...

And once again in Numbers-Bamidbar...

Numbers 29:12

12: On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, there shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall do no laborious work; you shall celebrate a festival to the LORD for a seven-day period.

In the autumn of the year, after the harvest has been gathered, when a man's thoughts tend to focus on the rich profits he has reaped, and he dreams of acquiring material things, the Torah tells us to build a sukkah, to exchange his solid home for a frail, makeshift dwelling. The sukkah is a reminder of what the children of Israel lived in during their forty-year journey through the wilderness and of the Clouds of Glory that protected them on their wanderings. As we sit in the sukkah we cannot help but feel God's sheltering hand around us. Our spirit soars as we realize that true happiness is found only in the eternal values of Torah, that material possessions offer no security, and that the shield of faith is the only protection we can rely on. We realize that, like our stay in the sukkah, life on earth is unstable and temporary. Looking up at the stars through the shrubs that make up the roof, we experience a closeness to the LORD. This nearness to God is the source of our joy, the exciting gladness that marks the Festival of Sukkot.

And when we take the Arba Minim (the Four Species) in hand, our one-on-one relationship with God is broadened to embrace all of Israel. For symbolically, the Four Species represent all the strata that make up the Children of Israel: the etrog, a tasty fruit with a pleasant aroma, represents the Believers who possess both Torah, good works and the Ruach. The lulav, the branch of a date palm, produces a sweet fruit but has no fragrance; it stands for those Believers who are learned in Torah but lack good works and the Ruach-Spirit. The sweet-smelling myrtle, hadassim, which produces no edible fruit, symbolizes the Believer who perform good works and have the Ruach but do not know the Torah. Finally, the odorless and tasteless willow, aravot, represents the Believer who lacks the Torah, good works and the Ruach. Thus, the lulav bundle symbolizes the totality of the Children of Israel, Judah, Ephraim and the Ger, the Whole House of Israel extending a helping hand to one another, all striving toward the same goals: fulfillment of the Torah to the best of their abilities but realizing that they will fall short of the mark without the help of Messiah Yeshua and the Ruach HaKodesh. We also proclaim to each other and the world around us that the LORD is the Creator and Master of the universe.

But there is a promise of something more that is hidden in Sukkot. Listen to what the Prophet Zechariah says:

Zechariah 14:1-21

1: Behold, a day is coming for the LORD, when your spoils will be divided up in your midst. **2:** I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem for the war; the city will be captured, the houses will be pillaged and the women will be violated; half of the city will go out into exile, but the rest of the people will not be eliminated from the city. **3:** The LORD will go out and wage war with those nations, as He waged war on the day of battle. **4:** His feet will stand on that day on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives will split open at its middle, east to west, [forming] a very wide valley; half of the mountain will move to the north and half of it to the south. **5:** And you will flee to the valley of the mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azal, and you will flee as you fled from the earthquake that was in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah. And the LORD, My God, will come; all of His Holy Ones will be with you. **6:** It will be on that day, the light will not be either very bright or very dim. **7:** It will be a unique day; it will be known as the LORD's [day], neither day nor night, but it will happen towards evening time that there will be light. **8:** It shall be on that day, spring water will flow out of Jerusalem; half of it [will flow] to the Eastern Sea and half of it to the Western Sea. This will be in summer and in winter. **9:** The LORD will be King over all the land; on that day the LORD will be One and His Name will be One. **10:** The entire land will change to a plain, from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem, and [Jerusalem] will become lofty and it will be settled in its place, from the Gate of Benjamin to the place of the first gate, to the Corner Gate, and [from] the Tower of Hananel up to the king's winery. **11:** People will live in it, and there will be no more devastation; and Jerusalem will settle in security. **12:** This will be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the peoples that have organized against Jerusalem: Each one's flesh will melt away while he is standing on his feet; each one's eyes will melt away in their sockets; and each one's tongue will melt away in their mouths. **13:** It shall be on that day that there will be a great panic of the LORD among them; each one will grab the

hand of his fellow, and his hand will be raised up against the hand of his fellow. **14:** Also Judah will wage war against Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the nations all around will be gathered – gold, silver and garments in great abundance. **15:** And similarly will be the plague of the horse, the mule, the camel and the donkey, all the animals that will be in those camps, just like this plague. **16:** It shall be that all who are left over from all the nations who had invaded Jerusalem will come up every year to worship the King the LORD, Master of Legions, and to celebrate the festival of Sukkot. **17:** And it shall be that whichever of the families of the land does not go up to Jerusalem to bow down before the King, the LORD, Master of Legions, there will be no rain upon them. **18:** But if it is the family of Egypt that does not go up and does not come [to Jerusalem], there will be no [water] for them; the same plague will come to pass with which the LORD will strike the nations that do not go up to celebrate the festival of Sukkot. **19:** This will be the punishment of the Egyptians and the punishment of all the nations that will not go up to celebrate the festival of Sukkot. **20:** On that day will be [written] on the horse's bells, 'Holy unto the LORD; and the pots in the Temple of the LORD will be as [numerous] as the bowls before the Altar. **21:** And it will happen that every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah will be holy unto the LORD, Master of Legions; all those who sacrifice will come and take from them and cook in them; and there will no longer be any merchants in the Temple of the LORD, Master of Legions, on that day.

It is interesting to note here that while the Jewish rabbis acknowledge that this passage is speaking about the End of Days and the War of Gog and Magog listen to what they say about verse 4. They describe this passage as follows: anthropomorphism (the attribution of human characteristics to non-human beings or things) indicating the cataclysmic events that will occur. Radak suggest that the splitting of the Mount of Olives is to be understood as a metaphor for the total routing of the invading armies.

While they can see the truth in some things, the veil that covers their eyes was securely in place and still is, but it is slowly slipping away. It is Yeshua who stands on the Mount of Olives when He returns at His Second Coming as Messiah ben David-the King of Kings.

This is the truth. The rabbis of old saw it but would not acknowledge it. Listen to what they have to say about verse 7. 'It will become famous as the unique day when the LORD revealed His might and His wonders. When the tragedy of exile is about to begin (vv. 2-3), there will be great light, which is the LORD's salvation, as described in the preceding verses.'

Who is the LORD's salvation? Yeshua! That's what His name means. How much clearer can it be people?

This is the time when the Messianic Age will be beginning. The 6,000 years of human history will be coming to a close with a new chapter to begin. But before this happens hear what the Book of Revelation has to say on the subject.

Revelation 7:1-10

1 After this, I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the land, on the sea or on any tree. **2** I saw another angel coming up from the east with a seal from the living God, and he shouted to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea, **3** “Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads!” **4** I heard how many were sealed—144,000 from every tribe of the people of Israel: **5** From the tribe of Y’hudah, 12,000 were sealed; from the tribe of Re’uven, 12,000; from the tribe of Gad, 12,000 **6** from the tribe of Asher, 12,000; from the tribe of Naftali, 12,000; from the tribe of M’nasheh, 12,000 **7** from the tribe of Shim’on, 12,000; from the tribe of L’vi, 12,000; from the tribe of Yissass’khar, 12,000; **8** from the tribe of Z’vulun, 12,000; from the tribe of Yosef, 12,000; from the tribe of Binyamin, 12,000. **9** After this, I looked; and there before me was a huge crowd, too large for anyone to count, from every nation, tribe, people and language. They were standing in front of the throne and in front of the Lamb, dressed in white robes and holding palm branches in their hands; **10** and they shouted, “Victory to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

Part of Sukkot is the water drawing ceremony. It was called Simchat bet Hasho’evah, Celebration of the Water Drawing. In Isaiah 12:3 it says: “Joyfully shall you draw water, from the fountains or the wells of salvation.” Who is the source of this water? Messiah Yeshua! Water gives life, Yeshua gives life, the Torah gives life and when the water is poured out it is like the pouring out of the Ruach HaKodesh in Joel 2:28-29. Except that what took place at Mt. Sinai with the Giving of the Torah and what happened in Acts will pale in comparison to the outpouring of God’s Spirit upon the world. This is the Festival of Sukkot.

Blessings to all you at this very special time of the year,

Mordecai Silver

Rabbi, Etz Chayim-Tree of Life Messianic Congregation, Las Cruces, NM.

If you are not learning Torah, we invite you to attend JSI University, an accredited Distance Learning Institute for Yeshua based Judaic Studies of Higher Education. Drop us a line at student.support@jsi-edu.org and request a Prospectus and visit our website at www.jsi-edu.org and check us out. You can earn an approved degree or take the courses to help you grow in your understanding.



Rabbi Mordecai Silver, Ph.D.

Tel: (866) 874-7250
Fax: (866) 800-2390
www.etz-chayim.org
tolmm@etz-chayim.org

P.O.Box 467, Organ, New Mexico, 88052



For more information go to www.jsi-edu.org or email us at student.support@jsi-edu.org.