

SUKKOTH

Biblical Commands

LEV 23

³³ The LORD said to Moses, ³⁴ "Say to the Israelites: 'On the fifteenth day of the seventh month the LORD's Feast of Tabernacles begins, and it lasts for seven days. ³⁵ The first day is a sacred assembly; do no regular work. ³⁶ For seven days present offerings made to the LORD by fire, and on the eighth day hold a sacred assembly and present an offering made to the LORD by fire. It is the closing assembly; do no regular work.

³⁷ (" 'These are the LORD's appointed feasts, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies for bringing offerings made to the LORD by fire—the burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings required for each day. ³⁸ These offerings are in addition to those for the LORD's Sabbaths and in addition to your gifts and whatever you have vowed and all the freewill offerings you give to the LORD.)

³⁹ " 'So beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered the crops of the land, celebrate the festival to the LORD for seven days; the first day is a day of rest, and the eighth day also is a day of rest. ⁴⁰ On the first day you are to take choice fruit from the trees, and palm fronds, leafy branches and poplars, and rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. ⁴¹ Celebrate this as a festival to the LORD for seven days each year. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come; celebrate it in the seventh month. ⁴² Live in booths for seven days: All native-born Israelites are to live in booths ⁴³ so your descendants will know that I had the Israelites live in booths when I brought them out of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.' "

NUMBERS 29

¹² " 'On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. Celebrate a festival to the LORD for seven days. ¹³ Present an offering made by fire as an aroma pleasing to the LORD, a burnt offering of thirteen young bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. ¹⁴ With each of the thirteen bulls prepare a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; with each of the two rams, two-tenths; ¹⁵ and with each of the fourteen lambs, one-tenth. ¹⁶ Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering.

¹⁷ " 'On the second day prepare twelve young bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. ¹⁸ With the bulls, rams and lambs, prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. ¹⁹ Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings.

²⁰ " 'On the third day prepare eleven bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. ²¹ With the bulls, rams and lambs, prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. ²² Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering.

²³ " 'On the fourth day prepare ten bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. ²⁴ With the bulls, rams and lambs, prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. ²⁵ Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering.

²⁶ " 'On the fifth day prepare nine bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. ²⁷ With the bulls, rams and lambs, prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. ²⁸ Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering.

NUMBERS 29 cont.

- ²⁹ " 'On the sixth day prepare eight bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. ³⁰ With the bulls, rams and lambs, prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. ³¹ Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering.
- ³² " 'On the seventh day prepare seven bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. ³³ With the bulls, rams and lambs, prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. ³⁴ Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering.
- ³⁵ " 'On the eighth day hold an assembly and do no regular work. ³⁶ Present an offering made by fire as an aroma pleasing to the LORD, a burnt offering of one bull, one ram and seven male lambs a year old, all without defect. ³⁷ With the bull, the ram and the lambs, prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. ³⁸ Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering.
- ³⁹ " 'In addition to what you vow and your freewill offerings, prepare these for the LORD at your appointed feasts: your burnt offerings, grain offerings, drink offerings and fellowship offerings. "

Deut 16

- ¹³ Celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days after you have gathered the produce of your threshing floor and your winepress. ¹⁴ Be joyful at your Feast—you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, and the Levites, the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns. ¹⁵ For seven days celebrate the Feast to the LORD your God at the place the LORD will choose. For the LORD your God will bless you in all your harvest and in all the work of your hands, and your joy will be complete.
- ¹⁶ Three times a year all your men must appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles. No man should appear before the LORD empty-handed: ¹⁷ Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you.

Zech 14:16-17

Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. If any of the peoples of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, they will have no rain.

Feast of Tabernacles

The seventh and final Feast of the Lord is the Feast of Tabernacles. It occurs five days after the Day of Atonement on the fifteenth of Tishri (October). This feast is also called the Feast of Ingathering (Exodus 23:16; 34:22), the Feast to the Lord (Leviticus 23:39; Judges 21:9), the Feast of Booths, or simply "the feast" (Leviticus 23:36; Deuteronomy 16:13; I Kings 8:2; II Chronicles 5:3, 7:8; Nehemiah 8:14; Isaiah 30:29; Ezekiel 45:23,25) because it was so well-known.

After the return from Exile, Ezra read the law and led the Israelites in acts of penitence during the Feast of Tabernacles (Nehemiah 8:13-18). The dedication of Solomon's Temple also took place (I Kings 8:2) during this feast. Later, Josephus referred to the Feast of Tabernacles as the holiest and greatest of the Hebrew feasts.

On the first day of the feast, each participant had to collect twigs of myrtle, willow, and palm in the area of Jerusalem for construction of their booth (Nehemiah 8:13-18). These "huts" or "booths" were constructed from bulrushes as joyful reminders of the temporary housing erected by their forefathers during the Exodus wanderings (Leviticus 23:40-41; Deuteronomy 16:14). The "booth" in Scripture is a symbol of protection, preservation, and shelter from heat and storm (Psalm 27:5; 31:20; Isaiah 4:6). The rejoicing community included family, servants, orphans, widows, Levites, and sojourners (Deuteronomy 16:13-15).

Besides the construction of the booths, other festivities included the ingathering of the labor of the field (Exodus 23:16), the ingathering of the threshing floor and winepress (Deuteronomy 16:13), and the ingathering of the fruit of the earth (Leviticus 23:39). Samples of the fall crop were hung in each family's booth to acknowledge God's faithfulness in providing for His people.

An Overview of Sukkot's Traditions and Customs

For forty years, as our ancestors traversed the Sinai Desert prior to their entry into the Holy Land, miraculous "clouds of glory" surrounded and hovered over them, shielding them from the dangers and discomforts of the desert. Ever since, we remember God's kindness and reaffirm our trust in His providence by dwelling in a sukkah – a hut of temporary construction with a roof-covering of branches – for the duration of the autumn Sukkot festival. For seven days and nights, we eat all our meals in the sukkah – reciting a special blessing – and otherwise regard it as our home.

We reaffirm our trust in His providence by dwelling in a sukkah.

Sukkot is also called The Time of Our Joy; indeed, a special joy pervades the festival. Nightly Water-Drawing Celebrations, reminiscent of the evening-to-dawn festivities held in the Holy Temple in preparation for the drawing of water for use in the festival service, fill the synagogues and streets with song, music, and dance until the wee hours of the morning.

Sukkot runs from the fifteenth through the twenty-first of Tishrei. The first two days of this festival (in Israel only the first day) are a major holiday, when most forms of work are prohibited. On the preceding nights, women and girls light candles, reciting the appropriate blessings, and we enjoy nightly and daily festive meals, accompanied by the Kiddush.

Celebrations fill the streets with song and dance until the wee hours of the morning. The remaining days of the festival are Chol Hamoed ("intermediate days"), when most forms of work are permitted. We try to avoid going to work, writing, and certain other activities – many families use this time to enjoy fun family outings.

Every day of Sukkot, including Chol Hamoed, we recite the complete Hallel, Hoshanot, and Musaf, and the Torah is read during the morning service.

The seventh day of Sukkot is called Hoshanah Rabbah ("Great Salvation"). According to tradition, the verdict for the new year – which is written on Rosh Hashanah and sealed on Yom Kippur – is not handed down by the Heavenly Court until Hoshanah Rabbah. On this day we encircle the bimah (synagogue reading table) seven times while holding the Four Kinds and offering special prayers for prosperity during the upcoming year. During the course of the morning prayers it is also traditional to take a bundle of five willow branches and beat them against the ground five times.

Arba Minim - The 4 Kinds

- Every day of Sukkot (except Shabbat) we take the Arba Minim, aka "Four Kinds." Sukkot is a seven-day holiday starting on Tishrei 15 and concluding on Tishrei 21.
- What are the four kinds? A palm branch (lulav), two willows (aravot), a minimum of three myrtles (haddasim), and one citron (etrog). The first three kinds are neatly bundled.
- Arba Minim is a man's obligation. For women, it's optional but encouraged. Best place for doing this mitzvah is the sukkah, the outdoor holiday booth.
- Hold the lulav in your right hand (unless you're a lefty) with its spine facing you. Face east and say:
- Blessed are You, L-rd our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded regarding taking the Lulav.
- Pick up the etrog in your left hand.
- [On the first day of Sukkot (or the first time on Sukkot you get to do this), at this point say:
- Blessed are You, L-rd our God, King of the Universe, who has granted us life, sustained us and enabled us to reach this occasion.]
- Bring the lulav and etrog together and wave them—you've done the mitzvah!
- Nevertheless, the custom is to wave the Arba Minim in all six directions—south, north, east, up, down and west.
- Take along your Arba Minim to the synagogue for the morning services. We wave them again during the Hallel prayer and then parade them around the synagogue during the hoshanot ceremony.
- Jewish unity is one of the central themes of Sukkot. The four kinds you are holding symbolize four types of Jews, with differing levels of Torah knowledge and observance. Bringing them together represents our unity as a nation—despite our external differences. So in this spirit of unity, be sure to share your Arba Minim with your Jewish friends and neighbors!

The significance of tabernacles

The name of the Feast of Tabernacles derives from God's command to ancient Israel to build temporary "tabernacles," sometimes called "booths," to live in during the festival. The Israelites left their houses and built temporary dwelling places (Hebrew *succah*, meaning "hut of woven boughs") to live in while rejoicing before God. These reminded them of their release from slavery and their dwelling in booths when God brought them out of Egypt (Leviticus 23:34, 41-43). In stark contrast to the hardship of slavery, this festival emphasizes rest, peace and prosperity as it meets the needs of all people, including strangers, -widows and the poor.

The Bible emphasizes that, as with booths or temporary dwellings, our physical life is transitory. The apostle Paul's writings reflect this theme: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven" (2 Corinthians 5:1-2,). Hebrews 11 recounts the examples of many of God's faithful servants down through the centuries. It then concludes that "these all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were *strangers and pilgrims on the earth*" (verse 13).

The Feast of Tabernacles is an annual reminder of our temporary state and that we also "seek a homeland" (verse 14). This lesson is reinforced when we travel to a site of the Feast of Tabernacles and stay in temporary dwellings such as hotels and campgrounds.

This festival reminds us that, in spite of our material possessions, we are still mortals in need of a literal transformation so we may possess eternal life (1 Corinthians 15:50-54).

In the accounts of the vision that has come to be called the "transfiguration," Jesus gave a glimpse of the Kingdom of God to Peter, James and John. Christ appeared in glory and was talking with Moses and Elijah. Peter's immediate response was to suggest that they quickly construct three tabernacles. He seemed to understand the important connection between tabernacles and the future age of God's Kingdom (see Matthew 17:1-9; Luke 9:27-36).

Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah

And then there's the utterly unbridled joy of Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah, which surpasses even the joy of Sukkot.

Historically (in 1313 BCE, 2449 years since Creation), on Yom Kippur, God forgave the Jewish nation for the sin of the Golden Calf, and then, on the very same day, Moses descended from Mount Sinai with the second tablets, the symbol of God's acceptance of the Jews' Teshuvah (repentance). It is time to celebrate the atonement we've attained Every year on Yom Kippur we attempt to recapture the spirit of atonement which is present on that day. As such, a somber atmosphere prevails as we fast, pray, repent, and beseech God for forgiveness. A week and a half later, it is time to celebrate the atonement we've attained, time to rejoice with the second tablets. And the joy produced by reaching inwards, overcoming obstacles, and reconnecting to our essential core which remained faithful to God throughout, is absolutely unparalleled.

Jesus and Sukkoth

Just as God physically sustained the children of Israel in the wilderness with manna and water, so Jesus is our spiritual and eternal “bread and water.” Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty” (John 6:35). During the future period of time referred to in the Bible as the “Millennium” , Jesus actually will reside in Jerusalem and will provide peace and prosperity for the nations of the world which acknowledge and worship Him. The prophet Zechariah clearly stated that the people of the nations “...will go up year after year to worship the King [Jesus], the Lord Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles (Zech. 14:16).

Jesus is Preparing Our Permanent Home

These physical bodies we now occupy are only temporary dwelling places. Our bodies are frail, and will eventually begin to deteriorate. Life is short. Our hope is not in what the world has to offer, but in what God has already provided for us for eternity. Our permanent home is being prepared for us in eternity. Jesus said,¹ “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.”² In My Father’s house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.⁴ And where I go you know, and the way you know.”

⁵ Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?”

⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me..(John 14:1-6)

Jesus, the Bread of Life

Jesus affirmed, I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If a man eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. ... Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me (John 6:48-51,57).

Remember, the manna in the wilderness came down from heaven (Ex. 16:4,13,14; Psalms 78:23,24), just as Jesus was sent down from heaven by the Father to be our eternal “Bread” and sustenance.

Jesus is the Living Water

Our spiritual thirst cannot be quenched with anything less than Christ. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life (John 4:14).

On the eighth and final day of the feast, the high priest of Israel, in a great processional made up of priests and tens of thousands of worshipers, descended from the Temple Mount to pause briefly at the Pool of Siloam. A pitcher was filled with water, and the procession continued via a different route back to the Temple Mount. Here, in the midst of great ceremony, the high priest poured the water out of the pitcher onto the altar.

Since in Israel the rains normally stop in March, there is no rain for almost seven months! If God does not provide the "early" rains in October and November, there will be no spring crop, and famine is at the doorstep. This ceremony, then, was intended to invoke God's blessing on the nation by providing life-giving water.

Jesus, the Rock: Source of Living Water

Recall that God provided the children of Israel and their livestock water from a rock (Exo 17:6; Num. 20:8,11). Paul, speaking to believers in his time about these ancient children of Israel, said,

They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ (1 Cor. 10:3,4).

Jesus once attended a Feast of Sukkoth or Tabernacles in Judea. It is in connection with the Feast of Tabernacles and on the last and greatest day of the Feast, this eighth day that the gospel of John records a fascinating event. John wrote: ³⁷ On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” ³⁹ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:37-39). (The Son of God was saying in the clearest possible way that He alone was the source of life and blessing; that He could meet every need of the human heart.

In my opinion, it is probable that this loud proclamation came at the same time, on that very last day of the festival, that the water ceremony was taking place.

Jesus was claiming to be the *true* “Mayim Hayim,” or Living Water. While the people would be singing, “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation” (Isa. 12:3), Jesus would be suggesting that *He* was that “well of salvation” from which anyone who believed could draw Living Water. At a later time, after Jesus’ ascension into heaven, the Apostle Peter stated about Jesus, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Recall, also, that during the water ceremony, the two priests poured out water and wine upon the Altar. As Jesus hung on the cross, “...one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water” (John 19:34). I see this as an indication that Jesus, the Source of Living Water would pour out His blood on the altar in heaven for the sins of humanity (Heb. 9:11,12,14,24).

Jesus is the Light of the World

Another ritual included the lighting of huge Menorahs at the Court of the Women. The light from the Feast of Tabernacles lamps illuminated the whole city. Scholars suggest that Jesus referred to this custom when he spoke those well-known words, **Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”(John 8:12)**

Also other verses reveal Him as The Light.

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. ⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. ⁸ He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. ⁹ That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. (John1:1-9)

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”(John 9:5)

Jesus, the Branch

As has been pointed out before, another term for the Messiah is “the Branch”. The fact that this Branch is Jesus is signified in scriptural references such as Isa. 11:1 (a “shoot” or descendant of Jesse would grow into a “Branch” which would “bear fruit”) and Jer. 23:5 (a “righteous Branch” would be raised up from the lineage of David). It is interesting to note, concerning the “Branch” which would “bear fruit,” that God told the children of Israel to collect fruit to eat, as well as branches to build their booths, on the first day of the Feast of Sukkot.

On the first day you are to take choice fruit from the trees, and palm fronds, leafy branches and poplars, and rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days (Lev. 23:40).

God provided the children of Israel, wandering in the desert wilderness, with branches to construct temporary dwelling places (sukkot) as shelters to protect them from the elements. The *true Branch* (Jesus) one day (when He physically returns to earth, after the catastrophic Day of the Lord period) will provide for all the needs (such as food, shelter, and security) of those holy ones who are left in Jerusalem:

In that day the Branch of the Lord will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel. Those who are left in Zion, who remain in Jerusalem, will be called holy, all who are recorded among the living in Jerusalem. (Isa. 4:2,3).

Furthermore, God said,

In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David’s line; he will do what is just and right in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which it [He] will be called: The Lord Our Righteousness (Jer. 33:15,16).

Jesus and The Final Temple built

It previously was shown how God made a promise to King David that He would raise up an offspring (“seed”) to succeed David.

Whoever this was would be over God’s house (the Temple), would sit on the throne of God’s Kingdom forever, and would be referred to by God as “my son” (1 Chr. 17:11-14). Although King Solomon, David’s son who succeeded him as king, did build the first temple, this is *not* the person of whom God was speaking, because Solomon was not a high priest over the temple, was not the king forever and never was referred to as God’s “son.”

Sometime later, God told the prophet Zechariah, “Take silver and gold and make a crown, and set it on the head of the high priest, Joshua...” (Zech. 6:11). Now, the name “Joshua” (or *Y’hoshua*, “Jehovah [the Lord] is salvation”) is the Old Testament variation of “Jesus” (or *Yeshua*, “Yahweh [God] saves” or “salvation”). This event was symbolic of something which will occur yet in our future when Jesus, the Messiah is crowned High Priest and King. This further is verified by subsequent statements by God:

Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the Lord. It is he who will build the temple of the Lord, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two (Zech. 6:12,13).

This last statement is an indication that there will be harmony between two supreme offices, High Priest and King, because Jesus Christ will hold *both* of these positions at the same time. For the first time in history, “church” and “state” will merge and coordinate *harmoniously* together, a condition which mortal man never has been able to accomplish and maintain successfully and peaceably.

Additional verification that Jesus will be in charge of building the final Temple may be seen in a vision by the prophet Ezekiel in which he viewed the future construction of the final Temple area and the Temple itself (Ezek. 40:1–43:27). Ezekiel’s vision occurred “...at the beginning of the year, on the tenth of the month...” . It may be deduced that this was the tenth of the first month of the year—that is, Tishri 10 (which, as has been shown in this chapter, is Yom Kippur, the day of Jesus’ future physical return).

Ezekiel “...saw a man whose appearance was like bronze; he was standing in the gateway with a linen cord and a measuring rod in his hand” (Ezek. 40:3). Now, there are other places in the Bible where the body of an unidentified man (whom I believe was the pre-incarnate, glorified Messiah) appeared as glowing metal or brilliant bronze in color (Ezek. 1:26,27; Dan. 10:5,6; Rev. 1:13-15, 2:18); therefore, it is likely that this was Jesus rather than a mere angel. Since, as I have explained, I believe that Jesus will make His physical return to earth on a Yom Kippur (Tishri 10), the additional information linked to this vision leads me also to believe that He will begin to direct the measurements for the Temple and surrounding area on the very day that He arrives. To this majestic Temple, the people of the world actually will come to worship Jesus, the King and the Branch, annually on every Sukkoth for 1,000 years

Jesus, Shade and Light

God provided the children of Israel a pillar of cloud and fire to guide them, as well as to supply them a covering from the hot sun during the day and a light at night (Ex. 13:21,22; Psalm 105:39). The psalmist wrote, “My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. ... The Lord watches over you—the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night” (Psalm 121:2,5,6). John said of “the Word” (Jesus), “Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made” (John 1:3). Paul concurred: “For by him all things were created...; all things were created by him and for him” (Col. 1:16). Thus, we may conclude that Jesus, “Maker of heaven and earth,” is and will continue to be our Shade from harm and tribulation.

John also described Jesus as the “...light [which] shines in the darkness...” (John 1:5a) and the “...true light that gives light to every man...” (1:9a). The psalmist said, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path” (Psalm 119:105). Here, “word” may be taken to mean both the written Word of God and the living Word, Jesus (John 1:1). Jesus said of Himself, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (8:12); and “While I am in the world, I am the light of the world” (9:5). Jesus will guide our way through life with His Light of Truth, but only if we allow Him to do so. If not, we will walk in darkness and will end up frustrated and lost.

After Jesus physically returns to earth and sets up residence on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, He will ...create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over all the glory will be a canopy. It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain (Isa. 4:5,6).

Just as the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire were provided for the wandering ancient children of Israel, so a cloud of smoke and glow of flaming fire will be provided as shelter and refuge for the future Israelites who have survived the Day of the Lord holocaust (Isa. 27:7-11) and who will be brought to Jerusalem (27:12,13) by the Lord. The Lord Jesus Himself will continue to be the provider of shade and light, of peace and prosperity, which most of the earth will experience under His leadership throughout the Millennium.

Jesus, the King

I believe there is sufficient evidence in the Bible to indicate that Jesus Christ, on a future Yom Kippur (Tishri 10), will return physically as earth's King to gain control over the nations and the armies which have come against Jerusalem (Zech. 14:2,3,9) Five days after this (Tishri 15), on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, will be the first annual celebration of Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. If any of the peoples of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, they will have no rain (Zech. 14:16,17).

Clearly and literally, representatives from the nations of the world will go to Jerusalem each year thereafter to pay homage to the King of the entire earth, Jesus Christ, the Lamb (Rev. 15:3,4). (Any area of the earth not sending delegates to Jerusalem at this time each year will not receive any rain and if Jesus truly was born during Sukkoth, this festival each year would be a huge "birthday party"! I also believe that the wedding supper of the Lamb may be a 7-day celebration paralleling this very important 7-day Festival of Sukkoth .

As noted by David hundreds of years before Jesus was born, "You [God the Father] made him [Jesus, the Messiah and Son] ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet" (Psalms 8:6).

Jesus, along with resurrected, recreated believers, will rule the world (with *perfect* justice), for a period of 1,000 years (Rev. 20:6), until He has "...put everything under His feet"—including the final enemy, death. According to Paul, Jesus will rule until the time

...when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign [for 1,000 years] until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he [the Father] "has put everything under his [Jesus'] feet." ... When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all (1 Cor. 15:24-27a,28).

I fully agree with Job, my biblical and spiritual brother, who said, "I know that my Redeemer, Yeshua HaMashiach lives and that in the end he will stand [physically] upon the earth" (Job 19:25).

Jesus and The Millenium

The eschatological visions which speak of the coming of all nations to worship at Jerusalem refer to the Feast of Tabernacles on the occasion of their pilgrimage (Zechariah 14:16-21). This feast speaks eloquently of Christ's millennial Kingdom - of a new beginning without the ravages of the curse of sin. In that day, the earth will give her full bounty, all animals will be docile (Isaiah 65:25), armies will no longer march, every man will sit under his own fig tree (Micah 4:4), and righteousness will become a reality in the earth.

UNDERSTANDING THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

The Feast of Tabernacles completes the sacred festivals of the seventh month. In contrast to the somber tone of Rosh Hashanah and the Day of Atonement, the third feast of Tishrei was a time of joy. Israel had passed through the season of repentance and redemption.

The Feast of Tabernacles is called the "Season of Our Joy." One reason the Feast of Tabernacles was a time of joy was that after the season of repentance and the redemption of Yom Kippur came the joy of knowing your sins were forgiven and the joy of walking with God, knowing God, and being obedient to God. Historically, the Feast of Tabernacles commemorates the days in the wilderness of Sinai after coming out of Egypt. According to all natural laws, the Israelites should have perished, but were instead divinely protected by God. Prophetically, the Feast of Tabernacles is the festival that teaches on the Messianic Kingdom and the joy of that Kingdom.

The word tabernacle refers to a temporary dwelling place, which is the purpose of the booth. The booth symbolizes man's need to depend upon God for his provision of food, water, and shelter. This is true in the spiritual realm as well. The booth is the physical body, which is a temporary dwelling place for our souls and spirits (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). We need the food that the Word of God provides (Matthew 6:11, 4:4, John 6:33-35), the cleansing, rinsing, and washing that the Word of God brings to our lives (Ephesians 5:26), and the shelter of God's protection over our lives from the evil one (Matthew 6:13, Psalm 91). Our physical needs will be provided for by God if we seek Him spiritually (Matthew 6:31-33). The observance of the Feast of Tabernacles described in Leviticus 23:40-41 can be seen in Nehemiah chapter 8. The temporary dwellings or booths are described as a part of the festival. This is in remembrance of when the children of Israel dwelled in booths during their time in the wilderness (Leviticus 23:43).

Isaiah talked about the tabernacle in Isaiah 4:4-6. The divine order declares that after judgment, the Day of Atonement (Isaiah 4:4), comes a tabernacle for a place of refuge (Isaiah 4:5-6). The command to rejoice at this time is given in Deuteronomy 16:13-15.

A tabernacle is a temporary dwelling place. In First Kings 8:27, at the dedication of Solomon's temple during the festival of Tabernacles, Solomon asks, "Will God indeed dwell on the earth?"

The Scriptures say that Jesus became flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us (John 1:14). He came to earth at His first coming and temporarily dwelt among men.

UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF BOOTHS OR TABERNACLES

The Hebrew word for tabernacle is 'sukkah'. It means "a booth, a hut, a covering, a pavilion or tent." The Greek word for tabernacle is 'sk'en'e', which also means "a tent, hut, or habitation."

With this in mind, let's look at the context by which the word tabernacle is used in the New Testament.

1. Jesus tabernacled among us (John 1:14)
2. Peter spoke about his body being a tabernacle (2 Peter 1:13-14)
3. The apostle Paul told us that our earthly bodies were earthly houses or tabernacles (2 Corinthians 5:1-5)
4. The tabernacle of Moses was a tent of habitation (Acts 7:44, Hebrews 9:2-8)
5. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived in tabernacles (tents) (Hebrews 11:8-9)
6. The tabernacle of David was a tent or dwelling place (Acts 15:16, Amos 9:11). This tabernacle was the temple of Solomon (1 Kings 5:2-5, 8:1-21)
7. Jesus entered the temple on the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:2,27-29)
8. The Bible speaks of a heavenly tabernacle (Hebrews 8:1-2, Revelation 13:6, 15:5). This heavenly tabernacle will come to earth (Revelation 21:1-3)
9. Jesus was the true tabernacle of God (Hebrews 9:11)

So, the booth or tabernacle was a temporary dwelling place. Historically, it was to remind the people of their exodus from Egypt as described in Leviticus 23:42-43. Prophetically, the tabernacle points toward the future to the Messianic age, the Millennium. Spiritually, a tabernacle is supposed to remind us that we are but strangers and pilgrims on the earth, this being a temporary dwelling place. So the believer in Christ is but a stranger and pilgrim on this earth (Hebrews 11:8-10,13-16, Genesis 23:3-4,47:9, 1 Peter 1:17, 2:11).

The Feast of Tabernacles is the fall harvest festival. It begins on the fifteenth of the Hebrew month of Tishrei. Like the other pilgrimage festivals, the Feast of Tabernacles has an agricultural element. It marks the time of the harvest, the final ingathering of produce before the oncoming winter. Hence, it is also called the festival of Ingathering. "And the feast of harvest, the first fruits of thy labors, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labors out of the field." -Exodus 23:16

As just stated, the Feast of Tabernacles is called the Feast of Ingathering. Jesus told us that the harvest represents the end of the age. This is found in Matthew 13:39, Revelation 14:15 and Joel 3:13. The harvest refers more specifically to people who choose to accept Christ into their hearts and lives (Matthew 9:35-38, Luke 10:1-2, John 4:35-38 and Revelation 14:14-18).

Rabbinic Jewish interpretations

The Talmud, a major work of commentary in Rabbinic Judaism, expands on many of the passages that refer to Sukkot in the Tenakh. For example, it reveals a new angle on the story of Sukkot observance in the Book of Nehemiah. The Book of Nehemiah describes how, after the Babylonian captivity, the Israelites celebrated Sukkot by making and dwelling in booths. Nehemiah reports that “the Israelites had not done so from the days of Joshua” (Neh. 8:13-17). However, the Talmud (Erkin 32b) reasons that this cannot mean that the Israelites actually abstained from building booths for over nine hundred years, since "is it possible that the righteous King David never built a booth for Sukkot?". The Talmud concludes that Nehemiah would have referred to some specific characteristic of the booths in his time, rather than the booths themselves. The *holiness* that the Israelites had imparted to the land of Israel when they originally entered it with Joshua—which the land had lost once the tribes began to be exiled—was now returned to it forever by the returning exiles. (For this reason also, the laws of Shmita and Yovel, which are Mitzvoth that are only in effect upon *holy* land, were newly reinstated by the returning exiles. Malbim adds that Nehemiah's observation here was exclusive to the city of *Jerusalem* i.e. that Jerusalem had never been allowed to have booths built within it during the first temple era since—unlike the rest of Israel—it was not portioned exclusively to any one of the original thirteen tribes of Israel, rather it was the collective possession of all the tribes. Hence, Jerusalem was until now considered a *public* domain and was therefore not allowed to contain a booth, which can only be built, according to Halacha, within a *private* domain.

SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

One of the most outstanding truths of the Feast of Tabernacles involves the seasonal rains in Israel. The prophet Joel tells us that the former and latter rain would come in the first month (Joel 2:23). This is because Passover is the first month in the religious or sacred calendar, and the Feast of Tabernacles is the first month in the civil calendar. So Israel has two first months in the same year because of the special calendar that God set up in Exodus 12:2.

Hosea 6:3 tells us that the coming of the Messiah will be as the former and latter rain on the earth. His second coming will also be in the first month of the civil calendar, Tishrei. Jesus will return to earth during the fall of the year.

The fullness of this feast in the seventh month will be experienced at the coming of the Messiah when He will rule and reign on the earth during the Messianic age, the Millennium. This will be a time of joy for all believers in Christ and will be the age of Israel's glory.

God designed the agricultural and weather seasons in Israel to parallel the life of every believer in Christ who seeks to love Him and serve Him with all his heart. With this in mind, let us examine how this is true.

THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FESTIVALS TO THE INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER

- Every time a person receives the Lord Jesus as his own Savior, he spiritually experiences Passover. He is to flee Egypt, the world's evil system and ways, trust in the Lord, the Lamb of God, and allow Christ to be the doorpost of his heart. As believers, we are then to seek to live holy lives before God and experience Unleavened Bread. Just as Jesus rose from the dead, we are to consider our former ways dead to us and experience the newness of life in the Lord. Once we do this, we can be immersed (baptized) in the Holy Spirit and have the power of God (the anointing) in our lives. Spiritually, we have experienced the spring harvest of Israel in our lives. When we accept Jesus into our hearts and lives, He begins to teach us the Bible and show us how much He loves us, and we begin to grow in the knowledge of Him.
- At that time, God will begin to take us on a spiritual journey through the wilderness of life. Spiritually, we will begin to experience the dry summer season of Israel. Many things in our lives will not go the way we expect them to or how we trust God for them to go. In the process of experiencing life's bitter disappointments and struggles, if we keep our eyes upon God, He will take us from Passover to Pentecost. There He will reveal His ways and his Word, the Bible, in a deeper and more progressive way. By keeping our eyes on the Messiah through life's struggles, God will not only reveal His Word, the Bible, to us in a greater way, but He also will refine our faith like fine flour, just as was done to the wheat during the days of counting the omer between Passover and Pentecost. Meanwhile, if we put our entire trust in Jesus while on our spiritual journey in the wilderness of life as God refines our faith and reveals Himself to us in a greater way, then our spiritual journey will not end in the wilderness of life. Instead God will take us forward to spiritually experience the fall festivals and our spiritual promised land.

It is when we spiritually experience the fall festivals -- especially the Feast of Tabernacles, and enter into our spiritual promised land that God will anoint our lives for Him in an awesome way, as we live and serve Him, and we will then experience the greatest joy in our entire lives. Joy unspeakable! But we will experience not only joy, but also dancing, praise, victory, peace, and the power of God in our lives. Spiritually, we will be experiencing the fall harvest of Israel. The rain in the bible speaks of two things: the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit and an in-depth understanding of Jesus and his Word, the Bible, in our lives. Both the anointing of the Holy Spirit and great knowledge of spiritual truths will be present in our lives in order that we may accomplish the purpose God has for every one of our lives. Therefore, we have the anointing of God upon our lives so we may help to do our part to build up the Body of Christ to full maturity and to establish the Kingdom of God on earth until we come to that day when we will rule and reign with the Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords on earth during the Messianic age, the Millennium, and for all eternity.

Isaiah prophesied the restoration of the world

God used the prophet Isaiah to reveal parts of His magnificent plan for restoring the world. Written at a time during which Israel faced punishment for continued disobedience, the book of Isaiah was inspired by God to give the nation encouragement through the promise of a better world to come.

Jesus Christ, after reading in the synagogue one of Isaiah's prophecies, acknowledged the special understanding given to the prophet: "These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him" (John 12:41). Isaiah prophesied not only of Christ's earthly ministry, but also wrote of Christ's return in power and glory (Isaiah 66:15-16).

The basis for the messianic rule of Jesus will be God's law. Again, as Isaiah foretold, "it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:2-3).

A world of peace and abundance

After Christ's return, He will bring the creation in its entirety into harmony with God, and peace will no longer be the exception. King David said, "Great peace have those who love Your law" (Psalm 119:165). Imagine what the world will be like when everyone knows God's law and lives by it!

Of course, more than just knowledge is needed to bring about this amazing transformation. A *spiritual change* will take place among people. God, speaking through the prophet Ezekiel, describes how it will happen: "I will give you *a new heart* and put *a new spirit* within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. *I will put My Spirit within you* and cause you to walk in My statutes, and *you will keep My judgments and do them*" (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

The Spirit of God will influence people to willingly and enthusiastically obey God from their hearts. People will begin to place the interests of others before their own. They will start thinking of others as "better than themselves" (Philippians 2:3, KJV). Instead of exclusive self-concern, their goal will be to help their fellow human beings. Theft will cease. Disregard for others' property and feelings will be eliminated. Because the world will finally be at peace, countries will "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; *nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore*" (Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3).

During this 1,000-year period, God will change even the nature of wild animals, reflecting the peace that will descend upon society. Describing this idyllic time, Isaiah 11:7-9 says: "The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain . . ."

Reversing the effects of sin

God will heal physical infirmities. Isaiah 35:5-6 prophesies of this time during which "the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing . . ."

Of even greater importance will be the *spiritual* healing that will take place. Isaiah prophesied that Jesus Christ will complete the healing He began during His ministry on earth: "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me *to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion . . .*" (Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4:18-19). The accumulated results of generations of people following Satan's sinful ways will begin to be reversed.

As already mentioned, the Feast of Tabernacles is also called the Feast of Ingathering (Exodus 23:16). This name signified the completion of Israel's annual harvest. In this setting, God said, "You shall rejoice before the LORD your God" (Deuteronomy 12:12, 18; 14:26). So this feast is a time of celebration for the abundance God has given.

The same bountiful harvest theme continues in the future fulfillment of the festival. Through Isaiah, God spoke of the desert becoming productive land: "For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water" (Isaiah 35:6-7).

At that time the earth will produce abundant harvests. "Behold, the days are coming," God says, "when the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; the mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it" (Amos 9:13).