



HOPE IN A WORLD OF WOE

WITH THE WORLD in the throes of conflict; with Islamist terror movements – *Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Islamic State, al-Qaida, Hizb'ullah, Boko Haram, Taliban, al-Shabab, Jeemaah Islamiyah*, et al, threatening; and while the world builds up its weapons for mass destruction, and armies prepare for a third world war; and while the hope of millions of terrorised and displaced people has been dashed; and while emotional, traumatic and spiritual battles rage in the hearts of men and women, and nations, we could be left wondering if there will ever be any true peace this side of a global nuclear holocaust. Well, no, there won't be; for the Scripture says ...

“While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.” (1 Thessalonians 5:3)

There will be no true lasting peace, until the Prince of Peace, the Messiah, returns to fulfil His will, and to answer our petition,

“Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.”

And this is what the Biblical festival of SUKKOT – TABERNACLES - is all about. The Millennial Reign of Y'shua the Messiah – the Lord Jesus Christ.

The article on the Festival of Tabernacles is my main presentation in this issue. But to increase our expectation of future Glory, let's first consider some of the alarming news in the world right now.

OBAMA ON THE NEW WORLD ORDER

In a message, reportedly given to a select group (the Bilderberg conference) last May, Barack Obama reportedly made this forthright statement:

“As for the international order that we have worked for generations to build... ordinary men and women are too small-minded to govern their own affairs. Order and progress can only come when **individuals surrender their rights to an all-powerful sovereign.**”



KIEV FIGHTS IN UKRAINE’S SOUTHEAST FOR CONTROL OF SHALE GAS

YES IT’S ABOUT GAS !!!

regions. The resources are estimated at over **four trillion cubic metres**. A Kiev official says the shale gas deposits should be developed by **Western** countries. Fighting words says Putin!

NATO PLANS EAST EUROPEAN BASES TO COUNTER RUSSIA

AUG 27. NATO is to deploy its forces at new bases in eastern Europe for the first time, in response to the Ukraine crisis, and in an attempt to deter Vladimir Putin from causing trouble in the former Soviet Baltic republics, according to *The Guardian*.

CHINA CONTINUING TO WEAPONIZE SPACE WITH ANTI-SATELLITE MISSILES

In July, China conducted another test of a satellite-killing missile that reflects Chinese efforts to weaponize space, the commander of the US Strategic Command said.

KISSINGER: LAUNCH ALL-OUT BLITZ ON JIHADISTS

SEPT 7/14. Henry Kissinger has urged President Obama to “launch an all-out attack” on the terrorist group *Islamic State* in Syria and Iraq, warning that Americans have become “bystanders” in the Middle East. In an exclusive interview, the former US Sec of State said air strikes should be of “limited duration as a punitive measure” and “not make any distinction between Syria and Iraq.” - *Times*



ISIS GATHERING ON THE TEMPLE MOUNT

A Palestinian youngster is seen here holding an IS flag on the Mount.

SEPT 3. Israel’s Channel 10 broadcast a footage from a recent “Islamic State gathering” on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The report said the gathering underlined that Islamic State intends to focus on Israel in the future.

The gathering, attended by thousands, was organized by the *Tahrir* party, which is described as being the “Palestine branch” of the Islamic State. Speakers were filmed anticipating the liberation of Jerusalem and decrying Jewish pollution of the city. Several black IS flags were seen in the footage.

ISIS is ten times more powerful than Hamas, highly weaponised and carrying a bankroll of nearly half a billion dollars stolen from the Iraqi government. Half measures with the Islamic State could prove to be deadly - for Israel.

The report says that the Islamic State, “now knocking on Jordan’s door, has marked ‘Palestine’ as the next target on its list.” - NTEB News Desk

“Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion.” (Psalm 129:5)



GAZA

ZAHAR EMERGES FROM HIDING, ISSUING THREATS AGAINST ISRAEL

SEPT 5. A top Hamas leader, **Mahmoud Zahar**, who, during Israel's *Operation Protective Edge*, **spent his time in hiding**, was speaking during Friday prayers at Martyr Abdullah Azzam Mosque in Gaza City. He said: “If the West Bank had one quarter of the weapons that the Gaza Strip has, **Israel would be eliminated in one day.**”

Zahar's wish to see the West Bank flooded with rockets and mortars and other "tools of resistance" was echoed by other Hamas and Islamic Jihad leaders and spokesmen after the recent war in the Gaza Strip. Zahar himself was quoted recently as saying that Hamas's goal now was to "move the Gaza example of resistance" to the **West Bank**.

Even the Iranians seem to think that the time has come to turn the West Bank into a **launching pad** for attacks on Israel. During the recent war in the Gaza Strip, a senior **Iranian commander** of the Revolutionary Guard Corps, Mohamed Reza Naqdi, announced that Tehran had plans to "arm Palestinians in the West Bank" in order to destroy Israel. Naqdi boasted that the weapons used by Hamas and other Palestinian groups during the recent war had been manufactured and supplied **by Iran**.

If you are not yet convinced that Israel is fighting the **Islamic regime of Iran in Gaza**, just take note what then Iranian President Rafsanjani declared in 2001: "In due time the Islamic world will have a military nuclear device, and then the strategy of the West would reach a dead end, since **one bomb is enough to destroy all Israel.**"

What Hamas and Iran are saying is that if and when Israel pulls back to the **pre-1967 lines**, they, together with other Palestinians, would bring weapons into the West Bank to achieve their goal of eliminating the "**Zionist entity.**"

Zahar does not even believe that there is a need for large amounts of weapons – just one fourth of what Hamas and Islamic Jihad already have in the Gaza Strip are sufficient, in his eyes, to destroy Israel in one day.

Flooding the West Bank with weapons poses an existential threat to Israel. But this is also something that would **wreak havoc on Palestinians in the West Bank**.

Fortunately, Mahmoud Abbas and his Palestinian Authority are fully aware of attempts by Iran and Hamas to turn the West Bank into a base for terrorism and jihadis. Thanks to Israel, Abbas is aware of Hamas's effort to topple the Palestinian Authority and replace it with an Islamist government.

Last month, Israel announced the arrest of more than 90 West Bank Hamas members who planned to stage a coup against Abbas and renew terror attacks against Israelis. Were it not for Israel's effort, Abbas and his top officials would have been either killed or imprisoned by Hamas.

That episode explains why **Abbas has now ordered a massive crackdown on Hamas members and supporters** in the West Bank. During the Gaza war, Abbas refrained from such measures against his Hamas rivals out of fear of being accused of "collaboration" with Israel.

Since the cease-fire went into effect, Abbas's security forces in the West Bank have detained more than **80 Hamas men**. They have also stopped Hamas-affiliated preachers from delivering sermons during Friday prayers.

Abbas will be able to rein in Hamas in the West Bank only if he pursues security coordination with Israel. However, it would be unrealistic to expect Abbas or any Palestinian government to disarm Hamas and its allies in the Gaza Strip. Abbas and the Palestinian Authority would not be able to survive for one day in the West Bank without the presence of the IDF, especially given Hamas's rising popularity among Palestinians in the aftermath of the war.

TUNNEL RECONSTRUCTION HAS RESTARTED

SEPT 7. **A senior Hamas official says a Gaza group has started rehabilitating underground infrastructure. Residents of southern Israel blame Netanyahu administration for not going far enough to disable Hamas.**



Less than two weeks after Operation Protective Edge officially ended, and just days after the majority of Gaza-border residents returned to their homes, a senior Hamas source declared that Hamas has renewed its tunnel-digging operations.

Though the Palestinian source did not elaborate, and despite an Israeli source claiming in response that there was **no basis** for such a declaration, the Gaza-border residents maintain that the Netanyahu administration has not definitively ended the threat posed by the Hamas attack tunnels.

A senior government official in Jerusalem says Hamas is already digging new terror tunnels and smuggling a **new stockpile of missiles** into the Gaza Strip in preparation for its **next war** against the Jewish state. "Hamas did not wait a single moment after the last round of fighting, to begin its rearmament in anticipation of another round."

INTERNAL BATTLES IN GAZA

Although Hamas is the main terrorist organisation and the "governing body" in Gaza and remains the most popular party amongst Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, all is not going their way. An opposition group, Islamic Jihad, are a formidable rival to *Hamas*. *ISIS* is also working in the Strip.

According to *The Australian* (Sept 9/14), there are nine significant Salafist groups currently engaged in a secret war against Hamas. They are:

- Jaish al Oumah** (Army of the Nation);
- Jaljalat** (Rolling Thunder);
- Jaish al-Islam** (Army of Islam);
- Ansar al-Sunnah** (Loyal Followers of Sunnah);
- Jund Ansar Allah** (Soldiers of Followers of Allah);
- Al Tawheed Brigades** (The One God Brigades);
- Al Haman Mohamed Bin Maslamah Brigades;**
- Mujahideen Shoura Council** (Defenders of God);
- Ahrar al-Watan** (the Free of the Homeland).

All are Sunni, all want sharia law immediately, and some endorse kidnappings.

- www.theaustralian.com.au/news/features/

BOKO HARAM DECLARES A NIGERIAN CALIPHATE

The leader of the Islamist *Boko Haram* has declared an Islamic caliphate in Nigeria's NE Borno State. Once a predominantly Christian town situated near Nigeria's border with Cameroon, the town of Gwoza was seized by Boko Haram on August 5, prompting the massacre of up to **1,000 Christians** after the Nigerian military mutinied and refused to try and retake the town.

6-YEAR-OLD CHRISTIAN BOY BEHEADED

“Over 100 militants dressed in military uniforms swarmed a Christian village in NE Nigeria just as Sunday church services were beginning on June 1.” *Voice of the Martyrs* reports, “The rebels opened fire on the village and went after people with their machetes.”

“55-year-old Sawaltha Wandala witnessed the Boko Haram slaughtering children at a church as he arrived for the second service. He saw the men throw one child into a ditch. More concerned for the child than his own safety, he picked up the 6-year-old boy, who had survived being severely slashed, and immediately rushed to take the child to the hospital in Cameroon.

“He was stopped by five insurgents, who grabbed the boy from his arms and beheaded him, before turning to beat Sawaltha with tree branches. They finished their attack by striking him in the head with a large rock, leaving him for dead with blood running from his nose and mouth.”

SIERRA LEONE IN LOCK DOWN OVER EBOLA VIRUS

SEPT 7/14. Sierra Leone has announced a three day lockdown in an attempt to contain the Ebola epidemic sweeping through West Africa. Pedestrians and vehicles will be barred from the country's streets for 72 hours as health workers conduct house to house searches to check for Ebola victims who have been hidden by their families.

The worst-ever outbreak of Ebola has claimed 491 lives in Sierra Leone, one of three countries at the epicentre of the epidemic which has so far killed more than 2,000 across West Africa.



MICROCHIP IMPLANT AHEAD OF IPHONE 6 RELEASE

On Sept 7, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that a new **iPhone 6** was due for release that will have the capability of reading a microchip in the hand.

With a wave of the hand the front door can be opened, lights turned on, the car started, and limitless information accessed from databases.

A small number of Australians have already inserted microchips into their skin.

The implants are 12-millimetre cylindrical tags, slightly larger than a grain of rice. Encased in glass, they have no battery and are inert until brought into proximity with Radio-frequency Identification (RFID) or Near Field Communication (NFC) reader devices.

RFID - Radio-frequency Identification is based on wireless use of electro-magnetic fields to transfer data. It allows for automatic identification, storage of information and security passes.

- www.smh.com.au/technology/sci-tech

ALL AMERICANS WILL RECEIVE A MICROCHIP IMPLANT IN 2017 PER OBAMACARE

NBC News has revealed **all** American citizens will be implanted with microchips. The reason for the implants is to identify people on the spot. The report says this is necessary to determine; are you who you say you are?

Will the RFID microchip give too much power to Big Brother? That is the fear of many. There is a move by some states to halt this process. Most everyone is aware that animals are commonly micro-chipped. The RFID **Brainchip** is already being tested on some people.

It was reported that the use of Micro-Chips in Bill H.R. 4872 was located on page 1014 under "National Medical Device Registry. It tells about a "Class II Device that is implantable"; and yes, they passed the bill.

With the RFID microchip they can track the movement of the people that are implanted. They can also control the money and food of the people. It is also reported to be possible to even kill the people who don't obey. www.truthfeed.net/like-it-or-not-nbc-news-reports



CHINA PLANS TO NATIONALISE CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

AUG 14/14. China has announced its plans to **nationalise Christian theology**, a move that has many Christians concerned for the future. **Wang Zuoran**, [pictured above], director of the State Administration for Religious Affairs, said, "The **con-struction of Chinese Christian theology should adapt to China's national condition and integrate with Chinese culture.**"

Christian leaders believe that a **nationalised theology would focus more on politics than religion.**

China's announcement of a **national Christian Theology** comes in the wake of a government campaign which **forcibly removed crosses from churches across the country**.

THE WAR AGAINST THE SLAMIC STATE !

SEPT 11. President Obama has authorised air strikes in Syria in an expanded bombing campaign in Iraq to "degrade and ultimately destroy" the ISIS militants who recently beheaded two Americans.

The US military incursion is being bolstered by a coalition of Arab and European nations. **A HUGE WAR HAS BEGUN!**

SO MUCH IS HAPPENING!

All that I have mentioned, my friends, is but a sprinkling of the news that's going on out there. In the US, national leaders usually try to cool the rhetoric so that we don't panic. Not these days. They're saying things that folks like this just don't say aloud.

You know something's up when the Secretary of Defence says in a press conference, "**The world is exploding all over.**" And as a leader in the US Senate tells us, "The world is in **greater turmoil** than at any time in my lifetime."

Then the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff - the top military official we've got - talks about the growing and spreading terror movement in the Middle East.

He describes it as "an organization that has an **apocalyptic, end-of-days strategic vision.**" It's all disturbing!

WHERE IS THERE HOPE IN SUCH A WORLD OF WOE?

For most people of this generation, it is a matter of "hoping for the best," "make a wish and hope so"; or run around and try to throw a bucket of water on a massive bush fire. There's not much real hope – assurance - out there.

For the believer, a follower of Y'shua the Messiah, however, there's a whole lot of **true hope**; and hope in the Bible means an **assurance that comes through faith in the Word of the Almighty One**. We read about ...

the Hope of Righteousness (Gal 5:5);

the Hope of His Calling (Eph 1:18);

the Hope of the Gospel (Col 1:23);

the Hope of Glory (Col 1:27);

the Hope of Salvation (1 Thes 5:8);

the Hope of Eternal Life (Titus 3:7);

a Living Hope (1 Pet 1:3);

the Hope that is IN YOU (1 Pet 3:15).

And ...

"In Him – *Y'shua Messiah* - we also obtained an inheritance having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will, in

order that we, who were the first **to hope – to put confident trust in the Messiah**, might be for the praise of His glory.” (Ephesians 1:10-12)

“For You are my Hope, *my expectation*; O Adonai YHWH, *You are my confidence* from my youth. By You I have been sustained from *my birth*; You brought me forth from my mother's womb. My praise is continually of You.” (Psalm 71:5-6)

So there is much Hope – **assurance** – in our Heavenly Father, and in the Son, our Saviour.

And this brings us to our main topic ...

SUKKOT

THE FESTIVAL OF TABERNACLES

“Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.”



Sukkot is a great assurance for us, for it is about the return of Christ, and His glorious worldwide kingdom that is soon to replace of kingdom of Satan – a kingdom of enormous darkness.

SUKKOT is a 7+1 day festival. It is the final of the seven “Feasts of Yahweh” which Israel was commanded to keep in perpetuity.

The general Hebrew word for “feast” is *chag* (pronounced as *hag* with a guttural *h*); but the LORD also refers to His feasts as *moed*, meaning “**appointed time.**”

*“These feasts are the **appointed times** of YHWH, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at the times **appointed** for them.”* (Leviticus 23:4)

So they are specific appointments for His people to keep. If the King or Queen gave anyone a set appointment, they would be not be figuring out an excuse for not attending, would they? How much more important is an appointment with the LORD of Glory!

The Feasts of the LORD were given to Israel, but they have important **lessons for us all today**, and one first lesson is that our Heavenly Master greatly desires to meet with us every day! Moreover He wants to dwell in us, and that we live and have our being in Him.

“Tabernacles” follows the six earlier festivals –

- 1. Passover,**
 - 2. Unleavened Bread,**
 - 3. The Waving of the Firstfruits,**
 - 4. Shavuot (Pentecost),**
 - 5. Trumpets, and**
 - 6. Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement).**
- And then comes the seventh -**
- 7. Sukkot – the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths.**

But someone will argue, “So what? They may be good for Israel, but what have they to do with the Church – with us today?”

The significance is that all the seven festivals are fulfilled in the past, present and future **ministry of Y'shua**, our Messiah. ("Messiah" means the same as Christ - the *Anointed One*.)

Look! Here's the significance of the feasts in relation to our Saviour, and to us who are believers ...

The **Passover Lamb** is fulfilled by the **sacrifice of the Lamb of God** at Calvary. (1 Cor 5:7)

The week of **Unleavened Bread** pictures the **sanctifying work of Christ** in His redeemed people. (Rom 6:22, 1 Cor 1:30)

The **Waving of the Firstfruits** of the **Barley** harvest was fulfilled in the **Resurrection of Y'shua** – and He is the firstfruits of the resurrection of His people at His coming. (1 Cor 15:20, 23)

Shavuot – Pentecost was a **wheat** harvest festival, and it was fulfilled by the Messiah's **outpouring of His Spirit** on the new Body – the Church - on the day of Pentecost. (John 7:39. 14:16. Acts 2:1-4, 17)

The Day of Trumpets will be fulfilled by the sound of the trumpet at **the Rapture**. (1 Thess 4:16)

Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) is fulfilled by the Messiah's saving work at Calvary, and when Y'shua entered the HOLY of HOLIES in Heaven on our behalf. (Heb 2:17. 9:11-14).

Sukkot – Tabernacles will be fulfilled when Y'shua returns to establish the Millennial Kingdom of God on earth; that is, when God tabernacles (dwells) amongst His people. And it is already being fulfilled in the present dispensation as Y'shua indwells His people. (1 Cor 3:16, 6:19. Eph 3:17).

In this issue of *Maranatha Hope of Glory*, let us see what is behind Sukkot and why it is a blessed and joyful festival. The Jews celebrate it in their own way. But we will want to enjoy in a New Covenant way – for "**Christ is in you the Hope of Glory**" (Col 1:27); and we surely pray daily, "**Your kingdom come.**" (Matt 6:10. Col 1:13)



SUKKOT

ANTICIPATING THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

**THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES
ALSO CALLED, THE FEAST OF BOOTHS,
AND THE FEAST OF INGATHERING.**

Biblical dates - 15 to 22nd of the 7th month (Tishrei).

THIS YEAR (2014) THE SUKKOT DATES WERE - **OCT. 9-16.**

The word *Sukkot* is the plural form of *sukka* which means tent or booth – a **temporary dwelling place**. Tabernacles is mentioned in Scriptures more than any other Feast.

For Israel, Sukkot was a celebration of God's provisions throughout the 40 years of wilderness wandering when the people lived in booths – huts made of tree branches or tents. But Sukkot also looks forward to the Millennial Age when Y'shua tabernacles (dwells) in the midst of His people, and when He will be King over all the earth. (Revelation 21:3)

Sukkot was one of the three mandatory annual PILGRIM FEASTS for ISRAEL.

“Three times a year you shall celebrate a feast to Me. You shall observe the **Feast of Unleavened Bread**. (Passover week) ... Also *you shall observe* the **Feast of the Harvest** (Shavuot/Pentecost) *of the first fruits of your labours from what you sow in the field; also the Feast of the Ingathering (Tabernacles season) at the end of the year when you gather in *the fruit of your labours from the field. Three times a year all your males shall appear before your Master, Adonai Yahweh.*” (Exodus 23:14-17)*

There could be 2½ million people crowded into Jerusalem for these major festivals.

All three feasts included an essential harvest dedication and thanksgiving; the barley harvest, the wheat harvest, and the fruit harvest.

The **Thanksgiving** harvest festivals observed in the US, and in churches in a number of countries, are **fashioned after Sukkot**.

The command and requirement for the Feast of Sukkot is given in Leviticus 23:33-43 and Numbers 29:12-39.

The Feast of Sukkot began "on the 15th day of the 7th month, *Tishrei*." It continued for seven days as a “feast to YHWH.” (Lev 23:34)

Then to this 7-day event, an 8th day was added.

“For seven days you shall present an offering by fire to YHWH. On the **eighth day** you shall have a holy con-vocation and present an offering by fire to YHWH. It is a solemn, *final assembly. You shall do no laborious work on it.*” (Leviticus 23:36)

There were six specific directions given for the keeping of the feast – which could be fulfilled after they erected the Tabernacle according to God's specifications, and later, when they entered the land and occupied Jerusalem where YHWH would place His Name forever. (1 Chron 7:16)

1. All Israelites were to make, and to **live in BOOTHS** during the seven days of the Feast. This was to cause them to remember their past wilderness sojourn.



“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 caused the sons of Israel to live in booths when I brought them out from the land of Egypt. I am YHWH your God.” (Leviticus 23:42-43)

Eating the first meal of Sukkot, on the first evening, became a mandatory practice for Jews. And the people were encouraged to spend more time **eating and living in their booths** than in their homes during those festival days.

We believers today have reason to look back and see how the Master has brought us through a wilderness journey.

2. The 1st and the 8th days were to be **HOLY CONVOCATIONS** – like Sabbaths, they were to be days of rest - and for spending time with the Heavenly Master.

“On the first day is a holy convocation; you shall do not laborious work *on it*. ... You shall celebrate the feast of YHWH for seven days, with a rest on the first day and a rest on the eighth day.” (Lev 23: 35, 39)

3. **Burnt offerings and SACRIFICES** were to be presented to Yahweh on each of the eight days. Specifically, on each of the seven days, **2 rams, 14 lambs, and 1 goat** were to be presented to the LORD as sacrifices.

Bulls also were to be sacrificed in decreasing numbers – specifically: on 1st day 13 bulls, on the 2nd day 12, 3rd day 11, 4th day 10, 5th day 9, 6th day 8, and the 7th day 7. (That was, a total of 70 bulls).

On the **8th day**, it was to be 1 ram, 1 goat, 7 lambs, and 1 bull . (That brings the total to 189 animals over the eight days. (Numbers 29:12-39). Although there were many individual sacrifices as well, Sukkot was a contrast to the Passover when **every family** had to bring a lamb.)

But why were so many animals slaughtered? It illustrated, to some degree, the huge cost of redemption of God’s people, Israel. But more, those sacrifices were a type or picture of the sacrifice of Y’shua who paid such an enormous cost for the forgiveness of the sins of the world.

As the old hymn says:

*Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure, save me from its guilt and power.
Not the labour of my hands, can fulfil Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow, all for sin could not atone.
Thou must save, and Thou alone.*

4. Monetary and **HARVEST OFFERINGS** were to be presented to the Lord.

‘You shall present these to YHWH at your appointed times, besides your vowed offerings and your freewill offerings.’ (Numbers 29:39)

5. The people were to **REJOICE**, with the **waving of beautiful foliage and palm branches**, to celebrate God’s past goodness, and His present provision. There were four types of trees prescribed.



“Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the fruit (or foliage) of beautiful trees, and palm branches, boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before YHWH your God for seven days.” (Lev 23:40)

6. The Torah (the 5 books of Moses) **was to be read publically to all Israel** during the Feast of Tabernacles **every 7th** (sabbatical) **year**.

“Then Moses commanded them, saying, ‘At the end of *every* seven years, at the time of the year of cancelling debts, during the Feast of Tabernacles, when all Israel comes to appear before YHWH your God at the place He will choose, you shall read this Torah (*teaching and instruction*) in front of **all Israel** in their hearing.

‘Assemble the people, the men, the women and children. and the aliens staying in your town, so that they can listen and learn to fear YHWH your God, and be careful to observe all the words of this Torah.

‘Their children, who have not known *this teaching*, will hear and learn to fear YHWH your God, as long as you live on the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess’.” (Deuteronomy 31:10-13)



Nearly 500 years after the Law was given, **King Solomon** dedicated the first temple, on the Feast of Tabernacles (2 Chron 5:3. 7:8-9), and the Shekinah glory filled the temple. (2 Chron 5:13-14)

In Solomon’s temple the Shekinah was the Presence of Yahweh dwelling in His Holy House.

In the time of Messiah, tens of thousands of pilgrims would set up their individual booths in the streets and fields, all within ½ mile from the Temple, in preparation for the festival. With their camp fires burning it was an impressive sight.

The Sukkot festival began with the blast of the shofar at sunset, which was the beginning of the first day.

As Tabernacles marked the normal beginning of the Winter rains, there was great anticipation that Yahweh would send the needed rains again. The need for rain gave rise to a **Sukkot custom** that was not a part of the commandments. It is called ...



THE WATER POURING CEREMONY

This ceremony was being carried out during the Temple period, in the time of Y’shua. In this practice, each morning of the first six days of Sukkot, an appointed priest, accompanied by a joyful band of musicians and worshipers, marched from the Temple Mount down the Kidron Valley to the Pool of Siloam where pitchers (vessels) were filled with water. The priest filled his golden pitcher and then climbed back up to the Temple Mount where the water was poured

into a bowl that drained into the altar. That was followed by three blasts of silver trumpets, which signaled the start of the temple music, and singing by the people of the *Hallel* – Psalms 113 to 118.

Siloam had historical significance as David was anointed king with water from the Spring of Gihon which ran into the pool of Siloam; and subsequently, kings of his lineage were anointed with water from Siloam.

The final (7th) day of Sukkot was a special occasion called *Hoshanah Rabbah* – the Day of the **Great Hosanna**. (Hosanna means “save us.”)



The priest, coming in from the Siloam pool, handed the pitcher of water to the high priest who poured it into a silver vessel on the altar. As this was taking place, the priests were blowing three sets of seven blasts from the silver trumpets, and Levites, along with the people, were singing the words of Isaiah 12:3 in unison;

“Therefore with joy **you will draw water from the wells of salvation.**” (Isaiah 12:3)

This was followed by great rejoicing with the people and priests waving palm branches. Thereafter the people listened as a choir of Levites sang the *Hallel*.

The rabbis interpreted the pouring out of the water as a symbol of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Israel in the last days, relating it to scriptures such as:

“For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground. I will pour out My Spirit on your descendants, and My blessing on your offspring.” (Isaiah 44:3)

“I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions. Even on the servants, both male and female, I will pour out My Spirit in those days.” (Joel 2:28-29)

The water in Siloam was considered “living water” because it came from the spring of Gihon; and it was at Gihon that Solomon was anointed King. (I Kings 1:45).

Water from Siloam was used in the ordinance of ashes of the red heifer; and used in purification ceremonies, and in various ways. You may remember that Y’shua sent a blind man to wash his eyes in Siloam. (John 9:6-7).

(The miracle, of course, was not the result of the water, but obedience to the Master’s command.)

Psalm 118 was viewed as a **messianic psalm** and this gave a messianic emphasis to the Festival, as the priests who had ears to hear, could perceive that Sukkot had a prophetic significance. And of course, Zechariah 14:16-19 should have made them aware that Sukkot was much more than “booths in the wilderness.” It should convince **us also** that this Feast of Yahweh is about the Millennial Kingdom.

“Then the survivors from the nations that attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, YHWH of Hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. And if any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, YHWH of Hosts, there will be no rain on them.” (Zechariah 14:16-17)

Sukkot is an historical backdrop to the Messiah’s teaching in John 7 to 9.

On one occasion Y'shua watched the pouring out of the water ceremony. It was on ...

“the final and most important day of the Feast of *Sukkot*, when Y'shua stood and cried out! ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes *and* trusts in Me, as the Scripture has said, “rivers of living water will flow from his innermost being”.’ By this He meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive.” (John 7:37-39)

How appropriate it was that Y'shua, the true Messiah, should appear at the great Festival, and declare Himself as the Great Hosanna, the Messiah, and the Giver of the Rivers of Living waters. His words were not uttered in a corner, but in the open, and in a loud voice. It was an open invitation. **“Come to Me and drink.”**

The Heavenly Master had long before reprimanded Israel for its fatal decisions.

“For My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the **Fountain of living waters**, to hew out for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that do not hold water’.” (Jeremiah 2:13)

Now Y'shua was offering water, not from a hewn out cistern, or a stagnant well. He was offering **flowing living water**. And no doubt He was claiming ownership to Zechariah's prophecy:

"And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication, so they will look on **Me, the One they have pierced**; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly for Him, like the bitter weeping over a *lost* first-born." (Zech 12:10)

Some of the people believed and said, “This is the Messiah.” Others who were evidently unaware of Y'shua's ancestry and His birth place, said; “No! He is from Galilee, and therefore cannot be a prophet or messiah. The Messiah will come from Bethlehem.” And the chief priests of course were seeking an occasion to arrest Him.

Another **joyful Sukkot** festivity that was not commanded by God, but was long practised. It was ...



THE TEMPLE LIGHTING CEREMONY

In the Temple area there were four towering lampstands – about 75 feet high. They were fuelled by olive oil, and were lit and fueled by boys climbing up long ladders. The lights, seen all over Jerusalem, were breathtaking.

The Temple was crowded by thousands of pilgrims, and all night long, elders carrying burning torches, performed impressive dances and sang. The people also waved the palm branches in their hands during this ritual.

This “ceremony” began on the 2nd night, and it was repeated each night for the rest of the week. On the 7th night, the priests marched around the altar seven times.

The light ceremony was related to the descent of the Shekinah in Solomon's time; and it also looked forward to the future return of the Shekinah when the Messiah begins His Kingdom reign.

The Light display was so powerful that Jerusalem was called “The Light of the World.”

On the 7th day – Y’shua gave His call regarding the living water that He would give; and then on the next day – the 8th day – the Master returned to the temple where He summed up the Light Festival in His statement:

“I am the **Light of the world**; he who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12)

If it were not true, this would have been a most outrageous affront to all of Jerusalem.

Y’shua is indeed the Light, and the One over whom the Jews, and the Gentiles, should be truly excited. The Light of the World, in whom there is no darkness at all! (1 John 1:5). And as Isaiah prophesied regarding the Messiah:

“He, *YHWH*, says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should *merely* be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; **I will also give You as a light of the nations that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.**’ (Isaiah 49:6)

Another practice developed later was the...

ENCIRCLING OF THE ALTAR

The Temple priests attached willow branches to the sides of the bronze altar, and as the shofar sounded, they marched around the altar, continuously reciting Ps 118:25:

“Save now, we beseech Thee, O LORD! O LORD I beseech Thee, do send prosperity!”

As there has been no temple and no sacrifices since AD 70, the Torah Scroll on a central platform in the synagogue has replaced the altar and the Temple rituals. The Jews encircle the synagogue while singing Psalm 118.

And today, even the water-drawing and the light celebration are no longer practiced. Instead the emphasis is on the **reading of the Torah**, and **rejoicing in the Word** of God.

SIMCHAT TORAH

In the Middle Ages a new festivity was introduced. It was practiced on the holy convocation of the 8th day, and it gave the Jewish congregations a very real reason to rejoice. It is called Simchat Torah (rejoicing in the Torah) – pronounced Simhat – the **h** being guttural.

The people today, march around the synagogue and the surroundings, carrying uplifted Torah scrolls, with great rejoicing and dancing. This brought the Sukkot season to a triumphant conclusion.



THE PROPHETIC APPLICATION

The main significance of Sukkot is its anticipation of the coming kingdom, when the Messiah will gather the saved of Israel back to their land, and when the redeemed of the nations will also come up to Jerusalem to participate in the annual Feast of Tabernacles.

For the church, Sukkot brings the reminder that there is a joy set before us – the joy of reigning with Christ from the New Jerusalem, the Heavenly city.

THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

Men have long craved and striven for a Utopia – a perfect world. They have tried to establish a new world without the Heavenly Sovereign. And they still strive for a “new world” of their own making.

For Israel there is this very encouraging word from YHWH.

“My dwelling-place will be with them; I will be their God and they will be My people. Then the nations will know that I am YHWH who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is among them for ever.” (Ezekiel 37:27-28)

And it is not only prophesied in the Old Testament.

“I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘See now, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and *YHWH Elohim* Himself shall be with them - their God’.” (Revelation 21:3)

A prophecy of Amos should fill Israel with great anticipation and gladness:

“In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David, and wall up its breaches. I will also raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old.” (Amos 9:11)

And Amos’ prophecy has been repeated and amplified by the apostle Paul.

“After these things I will return, and I will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen, and I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, so that the **rest of mankind** may seek YHWH, and all **the Gentiles** who are called by My Name,’ says YHWH who makes these things known from long ago.” (Acts 15:16-18)

Sukkot looks forward to the **Climax of the Age – the Millennial Kingdom** – Blessedness for the Redeemed.

“Then the survivors from the nations that attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, YHWH of Hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. And if any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, YHWH of Hosts, there will be no rain on them.” (Zechariah 14:16-17)

“In the last days the mountain of the House of YHWH will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and **all nations will stream into it**. Many peoples will come and say,

‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of YHWH, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us His ways, so that we may walk in His paths.’ For the Torah (*instruction*) will go out from Zion, and the Word of YHWH from Jerusalem.

“He will judge between the nations, and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they learn warfare any more.” (Isaiah 2:2-4)

The Feast of Tabernacles will be mandatory for all nations at that time. But it will not be a matter of coercion; rather it will be a yearly delight – a thrilling visit to Jerusalem, and to the LORD’s House, to gather with millions of the Redeemed of the LORD, and to witness the Shekinah Glory of the LORD. (But even then there will be some in the Millennium who opt out – and lose out.)

THE SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE CHURCH

Sukkot is a reality in that the Holy Spirit dwells –tabernacles - in all believers. They are, each one, a temple – a tabernacle of God; and corporally, they are the Body, the Temple of Christ. (1 Corinthians 6:19)

The sukka (booth) is a **symbol of Y'shua** who is our Refuge in times of distress and adversity - but He's not a flimsy tent. He is our Protection, our Fortress, our Stronghold. (Ps 18:2; 19:14. Hebrews 6:18), and we can always hide in Him – the Rock of all Ages.

It is believed that **the birth of Y'shua was during Sukkot**.

“**And the Word was made flesh and dwelt - tabernacled - among us.**” (John 1:14).

Many believe that Y'shua will return at Sukkot to establish His Kingdom – to dwell among His people. Many believe that the Rapture could happen at the Feast of Trumpets. Some believe it could happen at Shavuot – Pentecost - which was the inauguration of the Church.

There's much about Sukkot that pertains to, and in fact, is experienced in the church today – the **GATHERING TO** and **REJOICING in the LORD**, the **REJOICING in the WORD**; **THE POURING OUT** of the water– the living rivers of the Holy Spirit; the **LIGHTS** speaking of the **SHEKINAH GLORY** that dwells in each true member of the church. ...

Moreover, the **TABERNACLE** - the dwelling place of **YHWH**; the **LIVING IN A BOOTH** – Y'shua is our Refuge, our Booth, our Dwelling Place; and we are told to abide, to live in Him always (John 15:7). But I repeat, Y'shua our Refuge is not like a feeble hut made of branches. He is a mighty Fortress, and Stronghold. (Ps 18:2) ...

The **OFFERINGS to the LORD**, not animals for a temporary covering, but offerings of our lives daily as a living, spiritual and holy Sacrifice for worship and service. (Rom 12:1. 1 Pet 2:5); the **INGATHERING** – our contributing towards the winning souls and the bringing in the sheaves. **ANTICIPATION** of reigning with the Messiah.

For the church, **Sukkot is a reality!** **The Holy Spirit tabernacles in all believers.** They are, each one, a temple – a tabernacle of God; and corporally, they are the Body, the Temple of Christ. (1 Corinthians 6:19)

So why don't we celebrate and proclaim the promised coming Millennium in these days – in a Christian type of way? We don't need to imitate the ancient Jewish rituals, nor the modern festivities.

In Jerusalem, over the past 40-50 years, Christians have celebrated a Feast of Tabernacles. Some 5,000 people from many countries around the world, gather for most of a week to participate in a well organised time of meetings, joyful worship, seminars, street processions and special features.

At least our churches could have prophetic teachings on the Millennial Kingdom and the King of Glory, and a special occasion to rejoice in Him . It can be done.

Many of my Indian readers will recall the blessed times we had in Secunderabad/Hyderabad in the 80s and 90s. Our **King of Kings Festival** was an 8-day, morning to night program, with many features including competitions, street processions - even a motor bike parade. People came from all over India to join in the “celebrations.”



THE DAY OF INGATHERING

Finally, Sukkot is also referred to as the Feast of the Ingathering.

“Also you shall observe the Feast of Harvest of the first fruits of your labours from what you sow in the field; also the Feast of the Ingathering at the end of the year when you gather in the fruit of your labours from the field.” (Exodus 23:16)

The crops of fruit, grapes, olives, pomegranates, etc., gathered just prior to Sukkot, was the **final harvest for the year**.

This “ingathering” refers to a separation that occurs at the Second Coming of the Messiah - at the end of the Tribulation. It is the grapes in Revelation that give a grim meaning here. This speaks of reaping the harvest.

“Take Your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.’ ... ‘Put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the vine of the earth, for her grapes are ripe.’ So the messenger swung his sickle to the earth and gathered the grapes from the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great winepress of the wrath of God.” (Rev 14:15, 18-19)

The tares are separated from the wheat. Y’shua taught:

“First gather up the wild plants and bind them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn’.” (Matt 13:30)



It is similar to what happens at the Rapture when the redeemed are caught up to meet the Saviour; and the unsaved are left behind for the 7-year Tribulation judgment.

But at the second coming, the wicked (the unsaved) will be removed, and the redeemed will be left, to be brought into the Millennial kingdom. (Matthew 13:37-43)

So, while “Tabernacles” looks forward to the Millennial blessing, there is also **judgment ahead for the Christ-rejecting generation**.

IS OBSERVANCE OF THE FESTIVALS MANDATORY?

For Israel, Yes! For the church, No! BUT ... all the feasts point to realities in the Messiah; they have all been, or will be, fulfilled in Y'shua. They are all shadows and types of Messiah and His work.

So in one way, if we have the reality, if we have Christ, we don't really need the type. But there remains the need **to remember and express thankfulness** to our beloved Redeemer and for all that revealed about Him in the appointed days given to Israel.

The apostle **Paul has encouraged us to observe Passover and the unleavened bread**, in 1 Corinthians 5:6-8.

“Our Passover *Lamb*, the Messiah, has been sacrificed *for us*. **Let us therefore celebrate the feast**, not with old yeast, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.”

Passover is **not** a “You **must** keep the Feast” command. Rather it is as the Saviour said, “Do this in remembrance of Me.” (1 Corinthians 11:24-26).

Under the New Covenant we are free to keep the Feasts - the Festivals - in a New Covenant way, but there is no compulsion, except to ...

“Do this in remembrance of Me.” (Luke 22:19)

“Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

(1 Corinthians 10:31)

So if our heart wants to observe the festivals,
let us do so in a spiritual way as our Father leads us –
a way that glorifies Him. **Amen!**

