

The Fall Festivals:

Sukkot

Shemini Atzeret

by
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Speak to the children of Israel,
And say to them:
The feasts of the LORD,
Which you shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations,
These *are* My feasts.
Leviticus 23:2

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The Scriptures used in this booklet are:

- The Complete Jewish Bible (CJB)*
Jewish New Testament Publications
Clarksville, Maryland, 1998
- The Holy Bible - King James Version (KJV)*
Oxford University Press
London
- The Open Bible (New King James Version [NKJV])*,
Thomas Nelson, Inc., Nashville, 1985.
- The Tanakh (TNK)*,
Jewish Publication Society,
Philadelphia/New York, 1988

~ Introduction ~

Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them:
The feasts of the LORD
which you shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations,
These are My feasts.
Leviticus 23:2



Leviticus chapter 23 is the Festival Chapter of the Bible. Here is found, laid out in chronological order, all of the Festivals which God commanded the children of Israel to observe:

"And the LORD [YHVH] spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: "The feasts [moed] of the LORD [YHVH], which you shall proclaim [kara] to be holy [kodesh] convocations [mikra], these are My feasts [moed]."' (Lev. 23:1-2)

The very first thing that must be noticed about this passage is that these Feasts are not the "Feasts of Israel," or the "Feasts of the Jews;" they are the Feasts of the Creator God (YHVH) who made the heavens and the earth:

"Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You." (Jer. 32:17)

In order to be abundantly clear, God repeated Himself in verse four when He again stated these Festivals belong to Him:

"These are the feasts [moed] of the LORD [YHVH], holy [kodesh] convocations [mikra] which you shall proclaim [kara] at their appointed times [moed]." (Lev. 23:4)

It is important to understand the key words found in these two verses. The first word is *moed* (mow-ehd,' Strong's #4150), and it means:

"1) appointed place, appointed time, meeting 1a) appointed time 1a1) appointed time (general) 1a2) sacred season, set feast, appointed season 1b) appointed meeting 1c) appointed place 1d) appointed sign or signal. ..."

The second word in our study is *kara* (kah-rah,' Strong's #7121) which means:

"1) to call, call out, recite, read, cry out, proclaim 1a) (Qal) 1a1) to call, cry, utter a loud sound ... 1a3) to proclaim ... 1a5) to summon, invite, call for, call and commission, appoint, call and endow ..."

Finally we have a two word phrase: *mikra* (meek-rah,' Strong's #4744) *kodesh* (koh-dehsh,' Strong's #6944). *Mikra* means:

"1) convocation, convoking, reading, a calling together 1a) convocation, sacred assembly 1b) convoking 1c) reading."

Kodesh means:

"1) apartness, holiness, sacredness, separateness 1a) apartness, sacredness, holiness ..."

Thus we have the sense that these days are holy (set-apart) days, which have been appointed by God, on which the children of Israel are to assemble. Not only are they to assemble, they are to proclaim them loudly and publicly.

~ The Fall Festivals ~

Four of the Holy Convocations (*kodesh -- mikra*) occur in the late summer and early fall:

- ◆ *Yom Teruah* - Day of Blowing or Feast of Trumpets (more commonly called *Rosh HaShannah*).
- ◆ *Yom Kippur* - Day of Atonement.
- ◆ First day of *Sukkot* - Feast of Tabernacles
- ◆ *Shemini Atzeret* - The Eighth Day following *Sukkot*.

This booklet deals with the last two, *Sukkot* and *Shemini Atzeret*. *Yom Teruah* and *Yom Kippur* are explored in a separate booklet *The Fall Festivals: High Holydays*. (You may request a copy by writing to *Hebrew Roots*.)

All of the Fall Festivals are a type of "Rehearsal" of events yet to transpire -- that is the return of *Y'shua HaMashiach* (Yeh-shoe'-ah Hah Mah-shee'-ack = Jesus the Messiah), the reconciling of God and mankind, the establishment of the Kingdom of God -- the one thousand year millennial reign with *Y'shua* as King over all the earth, and the future coming of the New Heavens and New Earth.

The Spring Festivals: Passover, the Days of Unleavened Bread, and *Shavu'ot* (Pentecost) are "Memorial" Festivals, remembering those days which have already been fulfilled by the death and resurrection of *Y'shua* during His first appearance on earth, and the giving of the *Ruach HaKodesh* (Rue'-ack Hah Koh-dehsh' = the Holy Spirit) on the day of Pentecost. (Those Festivals are covered in detail in two other *Hebrew Roots* booklets: *The Spring Festivals: Passover in Egypt and Jerusalem*, and *Shavu'ot: The Feast of Weeks*.)

God has set aside His *Moedim* (Appointed Times) to meet with us. They have been given for our benefit, not for His. Therefore, as the Apostle Paul said in reference to the upcoming Festival of Passover:

"Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ [Messiah], our Passover, was sacrificed for us. ⁸Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (I Cor. 5:7-8)

Let us resolve here and now to keep all of God's Appointed Times in their season.

Shalom!

DEW & SAW

Beit Shalom, 2009

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

~ Sukkot ~

Speak to the children of Israel, saying:
The fifteenth day of this seventh month
Shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD.
Leviticus 23:34



The last of the three great pilgrimage Feasts of the LORD [YHVH] comes in the fall of the year after all of the crops have been harvested and stored for the coming winter. While the theme of *Rosh Hashanah* (Feast of Trumpets) is repentance and that of *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement) is redemption, the theme of *Sukkot* (The Feast of Tabernacles) is rejoicing.

This Feast, like others, has multiple names. First of all it is called *Hag HaSukkot* (Hahg Hah Sue-coat' the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths) in both Deuteronomy and Leviticus:

"Then the LORD [YHVH] spoke to Moses, saying, ³⁴Speak to the children of Israel, saying: "The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles [*Hag HaSukkot*] for seven days to the LORD [YHVH]. ³⁵ On the first day there shall be a holy convocation [*mikra kodesh*]. You shall do no customary work on it. ³⁶ For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD [YHVH]. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation [*mikra kodesh*], and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD [YHVH]. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it."

(Lev. 23:33-36)

This festival is to be celebrated for seven days (v.34) but the scripture mentions an eighth day as also being a *Mikra Kodesh* or Holyday. This eighth day has always been looked upon, by the Jews, as a festival separate from the Feast of Tabernacles even though it falls on the day immediately following the close of *Sukkot*. (The Eighth Day will be discussed in the following chapter.)

The second name for this festival is *Hag HaAsif* (Hahg Hah Ah-seef' or Feast of Ingathering). This name is used in a passage from the book of Exodus:

"... and the Feast of Ingathering [*Hag HaAsif*] at the end of the year, when you have gathered in the fruit of your labors from the field."

(Ex. 23:16)

In some passages this festival is referred to as simply *Hag*, (Hahg) or "the Feast,:"

"Therefore all the men of Israel assembled with King Solomon at the feast [*Hag*] in the month of Ethanim, which is the seventh month."

(I Kings 8:2)

In other passages it is called *Hag YHVH* or "Feast of the LORD":

"Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep

the feast of the LORD [*Hag YHVH*] for seven days; ..."

(Lev. 23:39)

In Hebrew the festival is simply called, *Sukkot* (Sue-coat'). This is the plural form of the word *Sukkah* (Sue'-kah) which means a booth or temporary dwelling.

Like the other two pilgrimage festivals, Passover and Pentecost, *Sukkot* is a festival centered around the agriculture seasons of Israel. During the Passover season, the priests offered the very first of the barley harvest to the LORD before the general grain harvest began. At *Shavu'ot*, they brought an offering of grain from the wheat harvest, plus the first of the produce from the just beginning fruit harvest. *Sukkot* completes the final harvest season, for by now all of the fruit has been harvested as well.

Like the other festivals, *Sukkot* has deeper meanings involved with it's celebration other than the obvious agricultural ones.

~ The Symbols ~

Like all of the "Feasts of the LORD," *Sukkot* is pregnant with symbolism and meaning. Attendance at *Sukkot* should not consist of merely listening to speakers expound scripture and then going out to eat lavish meals. It should also be a deep, meaningful, spiritual experience. By understanding the symbolism of the season a Believer can more fully appreciate and experience what God is teaching. Festivals are memorials of events past and rehearsals of events future. It is possible to gain a more complete understanding of those great events by studying these deeper meanings.

Several customs and ceremonies were observed during *Sukkot*, at the time of the second Temple, when *Y'shua* (Jesus) the Messiah attended the Feast:

""Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD [YHVH] for seven days; on the first day there shall be a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest. ⁴⁰ And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD [YHVH] your God for seven days. ⁴¹ You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD [YHVH] for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. ⁴² You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, ⁴³ that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD [YHVH] your God.""

(Lev. 23:39-43)

This passage contains two specific instructions concerning the celebration of *Sukkot*; the gathering of various plant species, and the construction of a temporary dwelling, commonly called a tabernacle or booth (*sukkah*), from which the festival gets it's name.

~ The Four Species ~

The scriptures speak of four species of plant life that were to be gathered and used in some way during the festival of *Sukkot*. Two are named: the branches of palm trees and the willows of the brook.

The other two species are not specifically identified, but tradition has given us their names. The word 'boughs' in the phrase "boughs of goodly trees," is more correctly translated 'fruit.' It is said to be the fruit of a citrus tree known as the *etrog* or citron. It is similar to a large lemon or very large lime. The phrase "boughs of thick trees" is traditionally thought to be the branches of the myrtle tree.

The tradition is to bind the palm, myrtle and willow together into a single bouquet that can be held in the right hand. The citron, or *etrog*, is kept separate and is held in the left hand. The four species combined are called a *lulav* (loo'-lahv), which is the Hebrew word for palm, the largest of the three tree branches used. The *lulav* includes seven items: 1 citron, 1 palm, 2 willows and 3 myrtle branches.

In Temple times the priests waved the *lulav* before the LORD [YHVH] as part of the *Sukkot* service. In addition, all of the people had *lulavim* (loo-lah-veem' = plural form) which they carried and waved during various ceremonies.

But what was the meaning behind all of this? The scriptures said to gather them, so there must have been some purpose for doing it, some special meaning ascribed to this practice that God wanted His people to learn. Again, tradition may hold some of the answers. Jewish tradition is often derived from the *Oral Torah*, which is the more detailed instructions that were believed to have been given to Moses, and others, telling them how to correctly perform certain ceremonies and what these ceremonies meant.

In the case of the *lulav*, tradition teaches that each specie represents a certain type of person, who would be found among the children of Israel:

- ◆ The *etrog* or citron has both good tasting fruit and good aroma. It represents those people who have a thorough knowledge of the *Torah* and also perform good deeds for others.
- ◆ The palm has good fruit but no aroma. It represents those people who have knowledge of the *Torah* but do not perform good deeds.
- ◆ The myrtle has pleasant aroma but it does not bear fruit. It represents those people who perform good deeds but do not have a good foundation in the *Torah*.
- ◆ The willow has neither fruit or aroma. It represents those people who have no knowledge of the *Torah*, nor do they perform good deeds.

These same four types of people can be found today in the Body of Believers.

A further interpretation of the four species, correlates each one with an organ of the body and the characteristics that it represents:

- ◆ The *etrog* resembles the heart since it has that type of shape. The heart is the place of understanding and

wisdom. In addition, it is said to be where sins originate. ("As a man thinketh, so is he." Prov. 23:7)

- ◆ The palm represents the spine, since it grows like a straight rib before it releases it's branches. It can be a symbol of righteousness, or of stiff-necked people.
- ◆ The myrtle leaf is shaped like the eye, which is the organ of enlightenment. The lust of the eyes leads to sin.
- ◆ The willow symbolizes the mouth out of which we can offer prayers to God, or speak unholy words.

One tradition teaches that the people represented by the four species are all bound together, (as symbolized by the *lulav*) and because of this close attachment they will all achieve salvation. It is believed the examples of the first three specie types will help bring the 'willows' to a repentant desire to learn *Torah* (the scriptures) and perform good deeds towards other people.

An additional ceremony at the Temple also utilized branches of the willow tree. Each day of the Feast the priests and people would encircled the altar waving their *lulavim*. As they circled the altar they would recite:

"Save now, I pray, O LORD;

O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity. (Psalm 118:25)

Then on the seventh day of the Feast (the Last Great Day or *Hoshanna Rabbah*) the people would go out to a valley called *Motza* (about thirty minutes away) and collect additional willow branches. Upon returning they would decorate the altar with the branches. Then they circled the altar seven times instead of just once, as on all the other days. This was to remind them of the circling of the city of Jericho when the walls fell down and God delivered the city into the hands of the children of Israel.

After completing this journey they would beat the willow branches five times on the ground causing some of the leaves to fall off. Since the willow represented those people who had neither good deeds or knowledge of the *Torah*, some believed this showed the destruction of the wicked and represented the judgment that was to befall them. Afterward, the leaves were swept up and saved to be burned in the fire that baked the *matzah* (maht'-zah = unleavened bread) for Passover the following spring. However, another belief held that the beating of the willows represented the resurrection of the dead. Perhaps one can make a connection between these two seemingly divergent views.

~ The Sukkah ~

The second instruction found in Leviticus, deals with building and dwelling in a *Sukkah* (booth or temporary dwelling) during the Feast of Tabernacles.

This passage has caused a certain number of problems over the years because of the belief by some, that one should actually build a temporary dwelling and stay in it for the entire festival of *Sukkot* no matter what the weather. This is a misunderstanding. The word translated "dwell" in this passage

is the Hebrew root word *yashav* (yah-shav'). Its primary meaning is: "to sit down (spec. as judge, in ambush, in quiet)." One could easily translate it as follows: "sit down and be quiet." Thus the command is really to spend some time each day of the Feast, in the *Sukkah*, in quiet meditation. Tradition holds that it is a good deed to partake of some food while sitting in the *Sukkah*.

At the other extreme, some have tried to rationalize their lodging in expensive quarters (that may be better than what one lives in the rest of the year) during the Feast of Tabernacles as constituting living in a 'temporary dwelling.' They claim this fulfills the command found in Lev. 23. Such a view is a gross exaggeration of the context in which it is given. The word 'booth' (*sukkah* in Hebrew) is just that, a small, temporary enclosure. While there is nothing wrong with staying in nice facilities while attending the Feast, we should not rationalize it into something which it is not.

The scripture tells us that one of the major things to do, while sitting in the *Sukkah*, is to remember that God had the children of Israel, 'dwell' (sit in booths which sheltered them from the hot sun of the desert) in booths (*sukkot*) when He brought them out of slavery from the land of Egypt. Some may view this as part of the harsh decree caused by their lack of faith in refusing to take the promised land as God instructed them to do. In actual fact, the *Sukkot* (while only temporary shelters) were a blessing to the Israelites for they provided the people with much needed shelter from the hot, midday heat of the sun.

Again, the symbolism is profound. Although the primary association with coming out of Egypt is found in the spring festival of Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, God wants to remind His people again at *Sukkot* that their existence here on earth, in fleshly bodies, is but a temporary one. God's people who dwell now in physical, temporary flesh, will one day dwell in permanent spirit bodies.

There are also traditions concerning the building of the *Sukkah*. First and foremost, it must be completely temporary. While palm branches are commonly used in Israel, one can use whatever material is at hand where they live. In the northwoods of Wisconsin it would be appropriate to build a *Sukkah* using evergreen branches. Palm branches are a little difficult to come by up here.

The roof is traditionally constructed so that it provides an adequate amount of shade during the day, yet allowing the stars to be seen through it at night while sitting inside. Tradition does not require one to sit in the *Sukkah* if the weather is inclement.

The *Sukkah* can be decorated with any and all kinds of fruits, nuts, vegetables, corn stalks, etc. It is the custom in many lands to decorate the *Sukkah* with wheat, barley, vines, figs, pomegranates, olives, and honey. This practice is based on Duet. 8:8.

Children should be included in the building and decorating of the *Sukkah*. The boys can help their fathers with the construction while the mothers and daughters can prepare the decorations and the food. Paper cutouts can be made by the younger children and also used as decorations. It is important that the children be involved.

A number of years ago we had the opportunity to build a *Sukkah* on the balcony of a condo at Lake Tahoe. We invited the entire congregation over for an afternoon *Sukkah* party. Over one hundred people came through the small condo that day. The children went downstairs into a spare bedroom and made decorations. You should have seen the joy on the faces of those young children when they brought their 'creations' upstairs to be hung in the *Sukkah*.

Since it is difficult for someone staying in a motel room to build a *Sukkah*, it would be appropriate if each festival site would plan to construct one or more that could be used by all the people attending. A decorating party could be planned for the second day of the Feast. Perhaps you will want to make this suggestion to those in charge of the festival site you are planning to attend. It could turn out to be the most popular place at the Feast, as people gather to fellowship and contemplate the temporary nature of this life.

~ The *Sukkah* in Scripture ~

In order to better understand the meaning behind the Feast of Tabernacles, it helps to explore the usage of the words *sukkah* and *sukkot* in the Scriptures. The first time the word *Sukkot* (Succoth) is mentioned in Genesis:

"And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, built himself a house, and made booths for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth." (Gen. 33:17)

Just prior to this event, Jacob (*Ya'akov*) had spent a night alone at a place he named *Peniel* (Peh-nee-el' = *the face of God*) where he had wrestled with 'a man' until dawn. As a result of this struggle, *Ya'akov's* name was changed to Israel (meaning a prince of God) and his thigh was wrenched out of joint. The next morning, *Ya'akov* went on to meet Esau, his brother, whom he attempted to appease with a multitude of gifts:

"Then he crossed over before them and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. ⁴ But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept." (Gen. 33:3-4)

After their meeting, Esau journeyed on to *Seir* while *Ya'akov* went to the place that was to be named *Sukkot*. Both of these place names are significant. *Sukkot* is the name used for the great fall festival that pictures living in temporary dwellings under the protection of God. *Seir* is also a significant name. It is a mountain in the land of Edom (another name for Esau) where Esau and his descendants lived. The place name *Seir* is derived from the Hebrew word *saiyr* (say-ear') which means a "shaggy he-goat." (Remember that Esau was a very hairy man and that *Ya'akov* was able to deceive his blind father into believing that he was Esau by putting goat skins on the backs of his hands.) The interesting thing about the word *saiyr* is that it is only used when describing the two goats offered on the Day of Atonement, and for goats used for the sin offering. Other Hebrew words are used for all other occurrences of the English word goat in the Old Testament. Thus, the place name *Seir* is directly related to sin, and the need for redemption

through the Day of Atonement. This is in keeping with Jewish tradition which holds that Esau represents sin and temptation:

"The burden of the word of the LORD [YHVH] to Israel by Malachi.

² **'I have loved you,' says the LORD [YHVH].**

'Yet you say, "In what way have You loved us?"'

Was not Esau Jacob's brother?' Says

the LORD [YHVH].

'Yet Jacob I have loved;

³ **But Esau I have hated,**

And laid waste his mountains and his heritage

For the jackals of the wilderness.'" (Mal. 1:1-3)

So when Esau, (whom God hated) departed to go to *Seir*, then *Jacob* (renamed *Israel* meaning a prince of God) was able to journey on to Succoth (Feast of Tabernacles) where he built booths (*sukkot*) for his cattle. Then *Ya'akov* built a house for himself, which is a picture of the Eighth Day, *Shemini Atzeret*.

Scripture mentions several uses of *sukkot* as shelter. First of all they were erected and used by the field hands during the grape harvest as protection from the hot midday sun. Since there was no danger of rain at this time of year, some workers would sleep in them until the harvest was completed, despite their flimsy construction. Isaiah used this picture to describe the situation in which the house of Judah found themselves at the time he began his prophesying:

"So the daughter of Zion is left as a booth [sukkah] in a vineyard, ... " (Isa. 1:8)

It was common for soldiers to erect *sukkot* to rest in between battles. David mentioned the *sukkah* of darkness that God provided for him while he was hiding from King Saul:

"He made darkness canopies [sukkot] around Him,

Dark waters and thick clouds of the skies."

(II Sam. 22:12)

Aside from the physical protection which the *sukkot* provided for the people, a more important usage of the term is to be found in the *sukkah* of protection that God provides for His people:

"You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence

From the plots of man;

You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion [sukkah]

From the strife of tongues." (Psalm 31:20)

"Then the LORD [YHVH] will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory there will be a covering. ⁶ And there will be a tabernacle [sukkah] for shade in the daytime from the heat, for a place of refuge, and for a shelter from storm and rain." (Isa. 4:5-6)

Several scriptures (including the one above) connect the *sukkah* with the Tabernacle (or Tent of Meeting) in the Wilderness and ultimately with the Temple. Here we see God

Himself dwelling with the children of Israel in a temporary structure:

"For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion [sukkah];

In the secret place of His tabernacle [ohel = tent]

He shall hide me;

He shall set me high upon a rock." (Psalm 27:5)

"In Salem [Jerusalem] also is His tabernacle [sukkah],

And His dwelling place in Zion." (Psalm 76:2)

The first Temple was intimately associated with the festival of *Sukkot*, for Solomon dedicated it during the Feast of Tabernacles:

"Therefore all the men of Israel assembled with King Solomon at the feast in the month of Ethanim [or Tishri] which is the seventh month. ³ So all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark." (I Kings 8:2-3)

In Jewish teaching, *Sukkot* was always known as the festival that represented God dwelling with His people. Dwelling in booths was a reminder, not of hard times in the wilderness, but of God's care and protection for His people in the wilderness of life.

Not only was the Temple to be a house for God and a place of prayer for Israel, in keeping with the universal theme of *Sukkot*, it was to be a house of prayer for all people. It is a little known fact that uncircumcised Gentiles were allowed to bring offerings to the Temple for sacrifice, if their motives were pure, even as it is written:

"Even them I will bring to My holy mountain,

And make them joyful in My house of prayer.

Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices

Will be accepted on My altar;

For My house shall be called a house of prayer for

all nations." (Isa. 56:7)

So God came and dwelt with Israel in the Tabernacle and the Temple through His *Shekinah* glory. Only Moses was allowed to speak with Him face to face. The High Priest had to communicate with Him through the *Urim* and *Thummim* (Oo-reem' and Thoo-meem'). Then it was given to the Son of Man, to come and tabernacle with humans in the flesh, and thereby communicate with all men:

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt [skeno] among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

(John 1:14)

The word 'dwelt' is from the Greek word *skeno* which is from another Greek word *skenos*, which means "a hut or temporary residence." Paul, in turn, correlates this word to the earthly body of each Believer, where the word *skenos* is translated as "tabernacle::

"For we know that if our earthly house, this tent [skenos], is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ² For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, ³ if indeed, having been

clothed, we shall not be found naked. ⁴ For we who are in this tent [*skenos*] groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life." (II Cor. 5:1-4)

As a man *Y'shua*, the Son of God, dwelt in the same tabernacle (*sukkah*) in which we dwell, that is, human flesh. He was born of a fleshly, Jewish mother, *Miriam* (Mary) but His Father was God. He experienced all of the pains, trials, joys and sorrows that befall all men:

"For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." (Heb. 4:15)

But there is an even more profound connection between the festival of *Sukkot* and our Saviour, *Y'shua HaMashiach*. This involves His birth:

"And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." (Luke 2:7)

Most people picture the baby Jesus (*Y'shua*) being laid in a type of feeding trough. While this may be the case, it is only by conjecture and is incidental to what God wants to communicate to us in this passage. The Greek word for manger is *phatne* (Strong's #5336). Other than the three usages in Luke 2, the word is used in only one other place in scripture:

"The Lord then answered him and said, 'Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall [*phatne*], and lead it away to water it?'" (Luke 13:15)

The context here is not important for our purposes, but the word 'stall' is. One would not tie an ox or an ass to a feeding trough. Animals are housed in a stall, inside a barn or shelter of some type, and they eat out of a feeding trough. In other words, our Saviour (*Y'shua*) was born in a *Sukkah*, probably similar to the ones that *Ya'akov* made for his cattle at a place called Succoth.

Here we see the hand of God, as He weaves this beautiful tapestry called the Festival of *Sukkot*. All the way from *Ya'akov* leaving behind sin (pictured in the person of his brother Esau) and going on to the joyful festival of *Sukkot*, down to the very birth of our Messiah, *Y'shua*.

~ A Sacrifice for the Nations ~

In the days of the Temple, there were sacrifices that had to be offered during *Sukkot*. In fact, *Sukkot* required far more animal sacrifices than all of the other festivals combined:

""On the fifteenth day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work, and you shall keep a feast to the LORD [*YHVH*] seven days.

""¹³ "You shall present a burnt offering, an offering made by fire as a sweet aroma to the LORD [*YHVH*]: thirteen young bulls, two rams, and fourteen lambs in their first year. They shall be without blemish. ¹⁴ Their grain offering shall be of fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths of

an ephah for each of the thirteen bulls, two-tenths for each of the two rams, ¹⁵ and one-tenth for each of the fourteen lambs; ¹⁶ also one kid of the goats as a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.""" (Num. 29:12-16)

As can be seen, this was quite a large offering for just one day. But it did not stop with the first day. Each of the seven days saw similar offerings, the only change being that on each successive day of the festival one less bullock was offered. Thirteen the first day, twelve the second day, eleven the third day and so on, until the seventh day of *Sukkot* when seven bullocks were offered. The other special sacrifices remained the same during the entire seven days. If you add up the total number of bullocks offered during *Sukkot* you will find it amounts to seventy animals.

The offering of seventy bullocks during the seven days of *Sukkot* has special significance that brings additional understanding to this season. According to tradition, when God divided the languages, at the time of the tower of Babel, He made seventy different nations, each with it's own language. The seventy bullocks offered during *Sukkot* represent those seventy nations. Thus, *Sukkot* is a festival with universal implications. It pictures a time when all the nations of the world will come under the rule of King Messiah in the Kingdom of God, and when peace will reign over all the earth.

It is also believed that each nation will be represented by one of the seventy descendants of Jacob, (*Ya'akov* = Yah-ah-cove) for when Jacob went down into Egypt he had a total of seventy offspring:

"All those who were descendants of Jacob were seventy persons (for Joseph was in Egypt already)." (Ex. 1:5)

~ Prayers for Rain ~

In was also tradition to pray for rain, not only for Israel but also for the seventy nations of the world, during the festival of *Sukkot*. Israel was considered to be a nation that was required to intercede with God on behalf of the other nations, since the nations were cut off from God because of their idolatrous practices. The connection between *Sukkot* and the nations of the world is evident from the following passage:

"And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD [*YHVH*] of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

""¹⁷ And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD [*YHVH*] of hosts, on them there will be no rain. ¹⁸ If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD [*YHVH*] strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. ¹⁹ This shall be the punishment [*chattah* = sin] of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles." (Zech. 14:16-19)

There can be no doubt that the festivals will be observed during the reign of King Messiah, and that *Sukkot* will play an important part for the nations of the world.

Some might ask if it is now appropriate to obtain a *lulav* and build a *sukkah*, since those instructions are found in the same passage with the sacrifices. Is it also then appropriate to offer the various bullocks, rams, and lambs?

The answer to these questions is twofold. First of all, there is no longer a physical Temple where animal sacrifices can be legally offered to the God of Israel. That does not, by it's self, negate the other instructions. However, there is a more profound reason why animal sacrifices are no longer necessary. They have all been replaced by the one sacrifice of *Y'shua HaMashiach*:

"But Christ [Messiah] came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. ¹² Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption." (Heb. 9:11-12)

The fact of the matter is, when one accepts *Y'shua* as their perfect sacrifice, one no longer needs to offer animals on the altar. However, we do bring a sacrifice every day, as long as we continue to accept His blood in payment for our sins. The Messiah's sacrifice does not prevent us from fulfilling the other instructions that are given for the festivals. We can gather and wave the four species, construct a booth, rejoice and also bring a sacrifice. Our sacrifice is the sacrifice of praise. We are able to rejoice because of our personal faith in the efficacious blood of *Y'shua HaMashiach*.

~ The Placing of God's Name ~

"You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, ... in the place which He chooses." (Duet. 16:13, 16)

Much has been made in the past about observing the Feast of Tabernacles in the place where "...God hath chosen to place his name..." It is interesting to note that this often quoted passage in fact pertains to Pentecost, not the Feast of Tabernacles. (See Duet. 16:11)

In the past, God did place his name in only one location at a time. That place was wherever the Tabernacle was pitched in the wilderness (or in Israel after they came into the land) and, later, where the Temple stood in Jerusalem. During the time of the Judges of Israel, this location was in Shiloh, and it was there that the festival of *Sukkot* was held each year:

"Then they said, 'In fact, there is a yearly feast of the LORD [YHVH] in Shiloh, which is north of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah.'" (Judges 21:19)

Later on, the Ark of the Covenant was moved to Jerusalem where Solomon built a house (temple) for God. From that time forth until the destruction of the second Temple, Jerusalem became the place where "God placed His name:"

"Then there will be the place where the LORD [YHVH] your God chooses to make His name abide. There

you shall bring all that I command you: ... ¹² And you shall rejoice before the LORD [YHVH] your God, ... ¹³ Take heed to yourself that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every place that you see; ¹⁴ but in the place which the LORD [YHVH] chooses, in one of your tribes, ... there you shall do all that I command you." (Duet. 12:11-14)

""Yet I have chosen Jerusalem, that My name may be there; and I have chosen David to be over My people Israel."" (II Chron. 6:6)

The Temple no longer stands in Jerusalem and the sacrifices ended over 1900 years ago. One, all encompassing sacrifice has taken the place of the animal sacrifices. That one sacrifice was God's own perfect Son *Y'shua*, when He offered up Himself.

So where does 'God place His name' today? Not with any single religious group, or in a specific location. Rather, He has placed His name in each individual person whom He has called into His Family:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in [into] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ..." (Matt. 28:19)

According to E.W. Bullinger, in his notes found in the *Companion Bible*, (KJV), the word 'in' found in Matt. 28:19 should be translated as 'into.' This means each baptized Believer has been immersed 'into' the name of God Almighty (*El Shaddai* = Ehl Shad-die'). Therefore, God has 'placed' His name in each one of us. So then, wherever you celebrate *Sukkot*, (be it with other brethren at a festival site, or in a *sukkah* in your own backyard) God has placed His name there.

Eventually *Y'shua* will have a new name given to Him, and when that occurs He will place that name on us:

"And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name." (Rev. 3:12)

Wherever you celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, God will be with you, especially if you are gathered with one or more other Believers. This fact should comfort those who might not be able to attend one of the many festival sites that are available..

~ Rejoicing ~

The theme of *Sukkot* is rejoicing within God's shelter. It is known as "The Season of Our Joy." God commands His people to rejoice at the Feast:

"... and you shall rejoice before the LORD [YHVH] your God for seven days." (Lev. 23:40)

"You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, ... ¹⁴ And you shall rejoice in your feast, ... so that you surely rejoice." (Duet. 16:13-15)

The only other festival at which one is commanded to rejoice is *Shavu'ot* (Pentecost) where the command is given

only once. *Sukkot* receives a threefold command to rejoice. Some translations render Duet. 16:15 as "... and you will have **nothing but joy.**"

Why is it so important to rejoice at the Feast of Tabernacles? The most apparent reason is because it pictures that time in human history when God will rule all the earth, when *Y'shua HaMashiach* returns as King of kings and Lord of lords. We look forward to a time of complete peace and total prosperity. Just what our politicians like to promise but can not deliver. It will be a time when little children will be safe because no one will want to harm them. It will be a time when people will walk in the streets of the cities and in the forest and the field at any time of day or night and have no fear. It is written:

"No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD [YHVH],' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD [YHVH]. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

(Jer. 31:34)

For Believers it will be especially sweet, for death will no longer have a grip on those who are resurrected or changed at the coming of Messiah:

"... And they lived and reigned with Christ [Messiah] for a thousand years. ⁵ ... This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ [Messiah], and shall reign with Him a thousand years." (Rev. 20:4-6)

We can be sure that in *Y'shua's* time, the people of Judea looked forward to the very same thing that we do today; the coming of King Messiah and the establishment of the Kingdom of God over the entirety of the earth. Jewish literature is full of writings about the coming thousand year reign of the Messiah, and they linked the Festival of *Sukkot* to that awaited time.

For this reason, rejoicing at *Sukkot* is a time honored tradition. It is said that anyone who has never experienced the rejoicing that took place at the Temple during *Sukkot* does not have any idea what it means to truly rejoice. The festivities began after sundown on the first day. During each of the intermediate days of the festival the rejoicing began following the evening (we would call it afternoon) sacrifices. The rejoicing would continue throughout the night.

The Court of the Woman was the site for these evening celebrations. Four huge candlesticks were erected for illumination. Each candlestick had four large golden bowls at its peak. Four ladders extended to each bowl which was filled with ten gallons of the finest oil. The wicks for these candlesticks were made out of the used undergarments of the priests. It is said that the entire city of Jerusalem was illuminated, to some degree, by these great lights. It was also said that the lights represented the *Shekinah* (sheh-kee-nah) glory that once filled the Tabernacle and the Temple.

There was music; singing and playing of instruments. The Levitical choir stood on the fifteen steps leading up to the great golden gates called the *Nicanor* gates. People would leap, dance, clap their hands and slap their thighs to songs and

hymns of praise. (Note well, the festivities were centered around the worship of God.) The greatest rejoicers of all were the leading men; the pious men, the priests, Levites, and Rabbis.

The celebration continued throughout the night. Two priests stood at the top of the stairs near the *Nicanor* gates with trumpets in their hands. When dawn arrived, they blew their trumpets. Then they proceeded down the steps to the eastern gate, called the Gate Beautiful, blowing the trumpets at various times along the way. Once they were through the gate, along with a large group of followers, they turned to the west, facing the Temple and proclaimed;

"Our ancestors, when they were in this place, turned with their backs unto the Temple and their faces towards the east and they prostrated themselves eastward toward the sun, but as for us our eyes are turned to the Eternal." (Edersheim p. 285).

This was a direct reference to a passage in Ezekiel:

"So He brought me into the inner court of the LORD's [YHVH's] house; and there, at the door of the temple of the LORD [YHVH], between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple of the LORD [YHVH] and their faces toward the east, and they were worshiping the sun toward the east." (Ezek. 8:16)

The Rabbis claim that anyone who refused to rejoice deserved to be punished:

"Because you did not serve the LORD [YHVH] your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything, ⁴⁸ therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the LORD [YHVH] will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you.." (Duet. 28:47-48)

It is said that "...joyfulness follows as a byproduct of holiness." This being so, we as Believers have every reason to rejoice at the Feast, for the great light of the world, *Y'shua HaMashiach*, now illuminates our lives, and His righteousness sets us apart and makes us holy. In addition, His Father (God) has become our very own Father. While the Jews had a vision for the 'great light' and therefore rejoiced, we have the reality and should be able to rejoice even more. *Sukkot is a time for rejoicing.* It is a time to sing and a time to dance before God, even as King David danced before the LORD when the Ark of the Covenant was brought to Jerusalem. He danced in reverence and celebration. To dance as an act of worship, where one dances to express their joy for being called by God, and to show Him their love and gratitude. Dancing at the Feast of Tabernacles is an ancient tradition enabling people to express their joy before the LORD.

The following passage in the book of Judges shows the custom of the young maidens dancing during *Sukkot*. This custom is mentioned in scripture because of a special situation that had taken place with the tribe of Benjamin. Because of a terrible sin and slaughter within Israel, only a remnant of men from Benjamin were left and they had no native maidens left to

marry. So the elders of the congregation came up with a plan so that the tribe would not die out:

"Then they said, 'In fact, there is a yearly feast of the LORD [YHVH] in Shiloh, which is north of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah.'²⁰ Therefore they instructed the children of Benjamin, saying, 'Go, lie in wait in the vineyards,²¹ and watch; and just when the daughters of Shiloh come out to perform their dances, then come out from the vineyards, and every man catch a wife for himself from the daughters of Shiloh; then go to the land of Benjamin.'" (Judges. 21:19-21)

Some modern congregations are learning to dance before the LORD as a part of their worship. It is a legitimate, scriptural method of worship, if it is done in the proper spirit of joy and humility. This is definitely not the kind of secular dancing common in the western world today.

~ The Water Pouring Ceremony ~

There was another ceremony that took place during *Sukkot* that was considered very important by the Rabbis and the general public. It was the *Water Pouring Ceremony*.

Rain is a critical commodity in the often dry land of Israel. We have already seen the connection between *Sukkot* and the coming year's rain, during the Millennium, as spoken of by Zechariah. Thus, the festival of *Sukkot* was a time when the Israelites beseeched God to send them the needed rain for the coming year. This was played out in the *Water Pouring Ceremony*.

Each day of the feast, except for the first day and the weekly Sabbath, a procession would begin at the Temple and proceed to the pool of Siloam. The designated priest would carry a golden pitcher. He was accompanied by a group of Levitical flute players and a large group of worshippers carrying their *lulavim*. Upon reaching the Pool of Siloam, the priest filled the golden pitcher with water. The entire procession returned to the Temple, entering through the *Water Gate* (so named because of this ceremony).

As the entourage arrived at the altar, the trumpets and shofars were sounded. They proceeded to the south side of the altar where two silver basins were placed on the southwest corner. One basin was to receive the wine of the drink offering, while the other was to receive the water. The two basins then drained out into one pipe which carried the entire mixture into the Kidron Valley.

When the priest finished pouring the water, the crowd would shout; "Raise your hands, raise your hands," to make sure the water had been poured properly into the basin. This practice resulted from an event that had taken place, during this ceremony, about ninety years before the birth of *Y'shua*. The sect of the Sadducees, (which was made up primarily of priests and Levites) did not support the *Water Pouring Ceremony* because they could not find scriptural evidence of its practice. (They accepted only the *Torah* as scripture.) The sect of the Pharisees (the Rabbis who ran the Synagogues) insisted that the ceremony be performed. They claimed that it was an oral tradition that had been given by God to Moses. Since most of

the common people followed the teachings of the Pharisees rather than the Sadducees, the priests felt it was the better part of wisdom to perform the ceremony.

Following the pouring of the water, the priests would lead the people in a march around the altar as they sang verses from Psalm 118.

One year, an especially wicked and disliked High Priest named Alexander Jannaeus, poured the water out on his feet instead of into the basin. The crowd became angry and began to pelt him with the citrons (*etrogs*) they were carrying (part of their *lulavim*). Jannaeus called in the troops to stop the riot, and six thousand Jews were killed in the resulting melee.

~ Hoshanna Rabbah ~

The seventh day of *Sukkot* is known as *Hoshanna Rabbah* (Hoh-shah'-nah Rah-bah') or the Great Hosanna. *Hoshanna* literally means "save now" and *Rabbah* means "great." Thus, it could mean 'Great Salvation.' To the Jews, the seventh day would be the 'great day of the Feast.'

"On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus [Y'shua] 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 [Y'shua] was not yet glorified." (John 7:37-39)

While Josephus and the apocryphal book of 2 Maccabees both speak of *Sukkot* as being an eight day festival, the day mentioned in the above passage is the seventh day of *Sukkot*. The Eighth Day is, in actuality, a separate Festival. The important thing is to remember what *Y'shua* taught concerning the 'living waters' pictured by this ceremony.

The term 'living water' is not an exclusively Christian term and it did not originate with *Y'shua*. Living water in Hebrew is *mayim hayim* (my'-eem hah'-eem) and denotes water that is not drawn from a well. A certain prescribed amount of water in the ritual immersion bath (*mikvah* = meek'-vah) had to be 'living water.' So *Y'shua*, as he so often did, was using terms that were familiar to the Jewish people and had special significance to them. He told them they would no longer need the *Water Pouring Ceremony*, for He will supply them with the 'living water' they need for salvation.

As mentioned previously, the *Water Pouring Ceremony* took place on each of the intermediate days of *Sukkot* (days two through seven). However, the ceremony on the seventh day was much more spectacular than what occurred on the other days. On the seventh day a group of people went out to the *Motza* valley to gather extra willow branches. Each person took one willow branch for his own use, while the rest were used to decorate the altar. While this was happening, the usual ritual procession to the Pool of Siloam took place with all of the musicians and people accompanying the High Priest to collect the water in the golden vessel. After the water and wine had been poured out at the altar, the people circled the altar

seven times (on the other days they circled only one time) with the priests leading the procession and singing:

**"Oh, give thanks to the LORD [YHVH], for He is good!
For His mercy endures forever. ...**

²⁵ Save now, I pray, O LORD [YHVH];

O LORD [YHVH], I pray, send now prosperity. ...

**²⁹ Oh, give thanks to the LORD [YHVH], for He is good!
For His mercy endures forever" (Psalm 118:1,25,29)**

It was during this last ceremony that the people would beat their willow branches five times on the sides of the altar or the ground, causing many of the leaves to fall off. Some saw the willows as useless plants that squandered precious water resources. Others said the willows represented the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment. Still others interpreted the fallen leaves of the willows as the shedding of the sins of the people.

It is believed that judgment begins on *Rosh HaShannah*, and that *Hoshanna Rabbah* is to be the final day of judgment. When the people are first judged on *Rosh HaShannah*, their names are said to be written into one of three books: The Book of Life, The Book of Death, or The Book of the Intermediates (those whose final judgment is postponed). On *Yom Kippur* the 'Intermediate' people are judged and the extent of their punishment is determined. It is said that on *Hoshanna Rabbah* the extent of the blessing is determined. Others simply said the judgment decreed on *Yom Kippur* was finalized on *Hoshanna Rabbah*.

It was because of the *Water Pouring Ceremony* on the seventh day, when they circled the altar and sang the verses from Psalm 118 seven times as they beat the willows, that this day came to be known as *Hoshanna Rabbah*, the Great Hosanna day of the Feast.

It is apparent from the gospel of John that *Y'shua* made a connection between the 'living waters' that were to flow from Him and His people, and the Holy Spirit that was yet to be given. However, this concept of connecting the 'living waters' with the Holy Spirit was one that had been made by the Jews for many centuries. Again, we do not have new concepts being taught by *Y'shua*, rather we have the old understandings now being revealed in their fullness. The following scriptures were all associated with the *Water Pouring Ceremony* and the 'Great Save Now' day of the Feast in *Y'shua's* day:

**"Therefore with joy you will draw water
From the wells of salvation." (Isa. 12:3)**

**"For I will pour water on him who is thirsty,
And floods on the dry ground;
I will pour My Spirit on your descendants,
And My blessing on your offspring;
⁴ They will spring up among the grass
Like willows by the watercourses." (Isa. 44:3-4)**

**"In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house
of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and
for uncleanness." (Zech. 13:1)**

**"Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall
be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and**

**from all your idols. ²⁶ 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. ²⁷ I will put My
Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and
you will keep My judgments and do *them*."**

(Ezek. 36:25-27)

All of these scriptures must have been in *Y'shua's* mind as He proclaimed to the people that the ceremony they had been performing all of those years was merely a shadow, a rehearsal, a type of the great cleansing of 'living water' they were to receive through Him:

**"Jesus [*Y'shua*] answered and said to her, 'Whoever
drinks of this water will thirst again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks
of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the
water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of
water springing up into everlasting life.'" (John 4:13-14)**

While *Y'shua's* references to the 'living water' are perhaps the most profound to be associated with *Hoshanna Rabbah*, there are other connections to be made with this day, through the giving of rain:

**"Be glad then, you children of Zion,
And rejoice in the LORD [YHVH] your God;
For He has given you the former rain faithfully,
And He will cause the rain to come down for you --
The former rain,
And the latter rain in the first month." (Joel 2:23)**

It is significant to note that Jewish teaching proclaims these prophecies concerning the former and latter rains as being symbolic of the harvest of souls.

Now, compare this righteous rain to be given to the people of God, to the fierce rain of fire and brimstone that will be given to those who make war against Him:

**"And I will bring him to judgment with pestilence and
bloodshed; I will rain down on him, on his troops, and on
the many peoples who are with him, flooding rain, great
hailstones, fire, and brimstone." (Ezek. 38:22)**

Let us accept the 'living water' that *Y'shua* offers, so that we do not need to experience the rain of fire and brimstone.

~ The Wedding Festival ~

Another meaning of *Sukkot* is the way in which it pictures a wedding feast. The entire annual cycle of the 'Feasts of the LORD' can be seen as a picture of the ancient Israelite wedding, from start to finish:

- ◆ Passover (*Pesach*) and the Days of Unleavened Bread (*Hag HaMatzah*) signify the match of Groom to Bride and the payment of the Bride price.
- ◆ Pentecost (*Shavu'ot*) is the actual Betrothal ceremony and the giving of the engagement present (the Holy Spirit).
- ◆ Feast of Trumpets (*Yom Teruah* or *Rosh HaShannah*) pictures the fetching of the Bride by the Groom.

- ◆ The *Days of Awe* (the days between the Feast of Trumpets and Day of Atonement) picture the time when the Bride and Groom are in the Wedding Chamber (*huppah* = hoop'-ah in Hebrew) consummating the marriage.
- ◆ The Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*) is when the Bride and Groom are revealed to the world.
- ◆ The Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*) pictures the celebration of the wedding by the wedding party and invited guests.
- ◆ The Eighth Day (*Shemini Atzeret*) pictures the setting up of the Bride and Groom's permanent dwelling.

It must be remembered that all of the festivals have multiple meanings. One cannot expect every aspect of a festival to perfectly fit every analogy. The primary aspects of *Sukkot* that make it a wedding festival are its length (seven days), the command to rejoice, the temporary dwelling (after the wedding feast the Bride and Groom go to their own house to live), and the fact that *Sukkot* is a festival for all of the remaining people in the world who will constitute the guests.

One must not confuse the ancient wedding with a modern western wedding. In our society, the wedding date is usually set months in advance. Much work and planning go into it's preparation and it is all over within a few hours on a single day. The same is true of a modern Jewish wedding. Although today's Jewish wedding does retain certain symbols from the ancient traditions, the full impact of the ancient wedding just does not exist in the modern version, either Jewish or Christian.

In the ancient wedding, the respective fathers of the Bride and Groom were responsible for matching the two participants. At the appropriate time, a formal covenant was made which was sealed by the drinking of wine. The Bride price was paid (or in the case of a poor man it was promised) in case he was ever to divorce her. The couple were then Betrothed, that is they were officially married and the union could only be broken by a bill of divorcement called, in Hebrew, a *get*. However, the couple did not live together or have sexual relations. (This was the state in which Joseph and Mary found themselves when they discovered that Mary was with child by the Holy Spirit.) At this point the groom went back to his father's house to prepare the *Huppah* (the wedding chamber). Neither the Bride nor the Groom knew when the wedding would take place, that decision was up to the father of the Groom. When he felt that both the *Huppah* and his son were ready, he sent his son to fetch the Bride. A brief ceremony was held and then the couple retired into the *Huppah* for seven days. It was during this time that the marriage was consummated. At the end of seven days they emerged from the *Huppah* and the Bride was unveiled so that everyone knew who she was. Then the wedding feast began which lasted for another seven days. At the end of the wedding feast the happily, fully married couple, moved into their own home to spend the rest of their lives together and raise a family.

It is evident, just from this brief synopsis, that the Festivals of God can be considered a wonderful picture of the greatest wedding that will ever take place; that of Messiah *Y'shua* to His bride, the congregation of Believers (both Jewish and Gentile).

All the aspects of the Wedding Feast exist in the picture of *Sukkot* that God has set forth for us. The Wedding Feast is a temporary event, hence the dwelling in booths. It also reminds us of the days we spend here on earth in our own temporary shelters, our physical bodies. But after the taking of the Bride, and the Wedding of the Messiah, we will no longer be in our physical, temporary shelters. Then we will be ready for our permanent homes, in spirit. The many animal sacrifices offered at *Sukkot* picture the abundance of food and drink that will be available for this greatest of weddings. The *lulav* pictures all the different kinds of people who will be invited to attend. The *Water Pouring Ceremony* tells us how the Holy Spirit will indwell all the people who live on the earth and attend the wedding festival. And then, of course, there is the rejoicing. What better time to rejoice than when the focal point of all human history has been reached. At that point the Bride and her Husband have become one, just as the Husband and His Father have always been one:

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; ²¹ that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me."
(John 17:20-21)

~ Summary ~

The Feasts of the LORD are given to teach us the plan of salvation and the ways of our Creator God. There is so much information contained in these festivals that one could spend their entire lifetime and still not plumb all that God has laid out for us:

"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!"
(Rom. 11:33)

This is indeed the 'Season of Our Joy.' It is a Feast of Tabernacles, a Feast of Ingathering and a Feast of the LORD. The symbols of the Four Species and the *Sukkah* are profound. We see the birth of our Saviour, the sacrifice for all nations and people, and the giving of the Holy Spirit all within the symbolism of this festival. It is a wedding festival picturing the greatest wedding ever to be held, and on that last day, the great day of the Feast (*Hoshanna Rabbah*), it leads us right into the next phase of God's plan for His children. LET US ALL REJOICE and be glad. For God has called us into His Family and is working a great work here on earth.

It is evident from all of the above material that the festival of *Sukkot* is another profound season that our loving Father has given us so that we might "... **grow in grace and knowledge...**" This booklet is only an introduction to the many meanings of this festival. We encourage each of you to explore all of the Festivals more deeply, to study the Scriptures, as well as other material that gives enlightenment to the meaning of these days. Above all, celebrate the Feast. It is only by actually experiencing the Festivals in their entirety that the real spiritual and emotional meanings, that God has in store for us, can be realized.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

~ Shemini Atzeret ~

Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month,
When you have gathered in the fruit of the land,
You shall keep the feast of the LORD for seven days;
On the first day *there shall be* a sabbath-rest,
And on the eighth day a sabbath-rest.
Leviticus 23:39



Now we come to the most enigmatic festival of the entire year. The festival year, which began with the beautiful picture of the children of Israel protected by the blood of the Passover lamb and being brought out of slavery in Egypt, is now concluded by a mysterious day with no clear meaning attached to it. What, indeed, does this Eighth Day mean? Why is there so little information to be found concerning it in the Scriptures, in the writings of the Jewish sages, or among Christian writers? The answer may lie in part to the fact that many have been looking for answers in the wrong places.

The Hebrew name for this day is *Shemini Atzeret*. Literally, the "eighth day of assembly." The word *atzeret* comes from the word *atzar* which means "to hold back" or keep in."

~ Jewish Interpretations ~

Most Jewish scholars admit that they really do not know why God commanded this separate, Eighth Day, to be celebrated after the close of *Sukkot*. Many just throw up their hands and say in effect: "We do not really know what it means, or why God gave it to us, but we observe it because He is our Creator God and He told us to do it."

Now there is nothing wrong with taking that position when one does not understand the meaning of the day. It is far better than saying; "I don't know why God gave us this day, so therefore I am not going to observe it." It is better to err on the side of holiness than rebellion. However, the best approach to gain understanding is to try and discern what God was communicating through the observance of the Eighth Day.

Because *Shemini Atzeret* is an unknown quantity, it became common practice to associate and recite the following verse on this day:

**"This is the day the LORD [YHVH] has made;
We will rejoice and be glad in it."** (Psalm 118:24)

The *Talmud* has this to say about *Shemini Atzeret*.

"The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel, 'My children, I know that during all seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles you have been occupied with offerings in behalf of the nations of the earth. But let this day be a day of rejoicing solely for you and Me. I shall not ask you for too burdensome an offering -- only one bullock and one ram.'" (*Pesikta Rabbati* 52.7)

In this view, *Shemini Atzeret* is a special day just for God and His people, when God asks Israel to tarry, to hold back (*atzar*) one more day.

Another view sees *Shemini Atzeret* as the completion of our rejoicing. Because we cannot rejoice perfectly in temporary dwellings, we must move into a permanent, comfortable home so that our rejoicing can be perfect and complete. Therefore the *sukkah* is not used on *Shemini Atzeret*.

Some have suggested that *Shemini Atzeret* was intended to be fifty days after *Sukkot*, just like *Shavu'ot* is fifty days from the Days of Unleavened Bread. However, God had mercy upon His people and did not make them do another pilgrimage to Jerusalem during the cold rainy season. Rather, He appointed the day after the Feast of Tabernacles for the observance of this Festival.

It is common in the modern synagogues to offer a special prayer for rain on this day. Thus, the abundance of rain is associated with *Shemini Atzeret* just as it is with *Sukkot* and the *Water Pouring Ceremony*. However, in the time of the Temple, the *Water Pouring Ceremony* was conducted on the seventh day, so this synagogue practice probably began at a later date.

Another interesting fact is that the Hebrew word *hag*, (*khahg*) which means 'festival,' is never applied to this day. It is always called *yom* (*yohm*) which means, simply, 'day.'

~ Simhat Torah ~

There is another traditional celebration that is linked to *Shemini Atzeret*. It is called *Simhat Torah*, (*Seem-haht' Toe-rah*) which means 'Rejoicing in the Law.' Each year, following the close of the Feast of Tabernacles, the Jewish synagogues begin anew the reading of the *Torah*, starting in Genesis 1:1. The entire *Torah* is divided up into sections, and one section is read each week on the Sabbath. The final section (Duet. 33:1 - 34:12) and the first section (Gen. 1:1 - 6:8) are read on *Simhat Torah*. Thus, the cycle repeats, year in and year out.

In addition to the *Torah* readings, there are also readings from the Prophets for each week of the year. This was why *Y'shua* was handed the scroll of Isaiah when he read in the synagogue in His home town of Nazareth. Apparently, the reading for that week included a passage from Isaiah. While the passage He read is not used in the modern synagogue, it is possible, at that time, that it was the required prophetic reading for that particular Sabbath. On the other hand, *Y'shua* may have skipped the standard reading from Isaiah, in order to announce to His hometown who He actually was:

"So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. ¹⁷ And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

**¹⁸ 'The Spirit of the LORD [YHVH] is upon Me,
Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives**

**And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;
¹⁹ To proclaim the acceptable year of
the LORD [YHVH]."** (Luke 4:16-18)

Simhat Torah is an annual event during which the Jewish people celebrate their attachment to the *Torah* which was given by God, through Moses. In Israel, this celebration occurs on the same day as *Shemini Atzeret* (the Eighth Day). However, in the rest of the world (the Diaspora), the Jews celebrate *Simhat Torah* on the day following the Eighth Day. In any case, it is not a biblical command to celebrate *Simhat Torah*, it is a festival of tradition.

In 1994, we were privileged to lead a tour to Israel during the festival of *Sukkot*, and were in Jerusalem on the Eighth Day. That evening, some of us went to a park in Jerusalem to watch the *Simhat Torah* celebration. Many of the local Orthodox Jewish rabbis were there, they all had their *Torah* scrolls, and they danced around the stage carrying the scrolls. It was called "Dancing With the *Torah*" and it was an integral part of the *Simhat Torah* celebration; a very joyful and colorful event.

The Orthodox Jewish community believes that they are married to the *Torah*. The people who dance with the *Torah* are considered to be the bridegroom and the *Torah* is the bride. It was the custom in Judea, during *Y'shua's* time, for a bridegroom to attend synagogue on the Sabbath following his seven day wedding festival, and to receive a hero's welcome there. He was given the seat of honor, special hymns were sung in his honor, and he was crowned with myrtle when called up to read a special marriage section from the book of Genesis.

Because of this connection (made by the Bridegroom of the Law and the starting over of the *Torah* readings), *Simhat Torah* and *Shemini Atzeret* became thought of as a time of New Beginnings. This is an important concept if one is to understand the Eighth Day.

Let it be stressed once again, the celebration known as *Simhat Torah* is not a biblical command. This celebration was not instituted until about the tenth century C.E. However, the practice of reading the *Torah* and Prophets in the synagogue on the Sabbath is very ancient and predates *Y'shua* by many years.

~ The Eighth Day in Scripture ~

The Eighth Day was very important in the worship of God during the Tabernacle and Temple period. A study of these ceremonies can help to bring a better understanding of the meaning of *Shemini Atzeret*.

The following ceremonies were all completed on the Eighth Day:

- ◆ The firstborn of an animal was always reserved for God. However, the owner had to leave it with the mother for seven days. On the eighth day it was brought to God as an offering. (Ex. 22:30)
- ◆ A newborn baby boy was allowed to exist in his natural state for seven days. On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin was cut off. (Lev. 12:3)

- ◆ When a leper was healed of his disease, he had to appear before the priest for examination. If the disease was gone from his body, he performed a seven day ritual cleansing. On the eighth day he was considered clean. (Lev. 14:10, 23)
- ◆ If a man had a running emission from his body he was considered unclean. Once healed of the emission, he was required to perform a seven day cleansing period. On the eighth day he was considered clean. (Lev. 15:8)
- ◆ When a woman had her monthly issue of blood she was considered unclean for seven days. On the eighth day she became clean as the result of a purification ritual. (Lev. 15:20)
- ◆ The land was worked for six years. On the seventh year it was rested. On the eighth year the farmer began again to raise crops on it. (Lev. 25:22)
- ◆ When a person took a Nazirite vow he separated himself to God for a period of time. When that time was up, he was required to offer sacrifices over a period of seven days. On the eighth day he was released from his vow. (Num. 6:10)

It becomes apparent, from reading the above list, that the Eighth Day was the day on which a person started over in some manner. Whether it was being cleansed, being circumcised or being released from a vow, the Eighth Day was significant as a New Beginning.

~ The Seven Day Plan of God ~

An ancient Jewish teaching holds that the weekly cycle pictures God's 7000 year plan for man on the earth. The apostle Peter seems to support this view:

"But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (II Pet. 3:8)

The first six working days of the week picture the current time period of six thousand years, during which time men find themselves under the rule of human governments, while the Sabbath day pictures the last one thousand years which will be the great Millennial reign of King Messiah (*Y'shua*) over all the earth. During the Millennium, there will still be physical human beings living on earth, but they will be subject to the rule of *Y'shua HaMashiach* in the government of God.

So then, if the total time allotted to mankind is seven thousand years, and each of those thousand year periods is as a day to God, what takes place on the Eighth Day? Let us pick up the story as the last one thousand year Millennial period begins. It is the time when *Y'shua* will bring peace to all the earth:

**"Now it shall come to pass in the latter days
That the mountain of the LORD's [YHVH'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.
³ Many people shall come and say,**

'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD [YHVH],
 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 [Torah],
 And the word of the LORD [YHVH] from Jerusalem.
⁴ He shall judge between the nations,
 And rebuke many people;
 They shall 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." (Isa. 2:2-4)

Satan the devil will be bound at the beginning of this one thousand year Millennial period and cast into a bottomless pit for the duration:

"He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. ..."
 (Rev. 20:2-3)

All those people who have a place in the First Resurrection, due to their acceptance of *Y'shua* as Savior, will reign with Messiah for that same thousand year Millennium:

"And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus [Y'shua] and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ [Messiah] for a thousand years."
 (Rev. 20:4)

These are the resurrected saints who will live and reign with *Y'shua* for the entirety of the Millennium. They will be given eternal life and can never die again:

"... This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ [Messiah], and shall reign with Him a thousand years. ..."
 (Rev. 20:5-6)

~ At the End of the Millennium ~

At the end of the this thousand year (millennial) period, four things take place:

1.) Satan the devil is loosed from the bottomless pit for a little season to deceive the physical people who are alive at the end of the Millennium:

"Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. ⁹ They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints

and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them."
 (Rev. 20:7-9)

2.) After Satan has done his dirty work once again, he is permanently incapacitated by being cast into the lake of fire:

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are [had been cast], and [he] shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."
 (Rev. 20:10 KJV)

3.) The rest of the dead (those who did not have a part in the First Resurrection) are resurrected back to physical life:

"But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished."
 (Rev. 20:5)

When they come up out of the grave and see all that has occurred, they will believe they are lost:

"Then He said to me, 'Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, "Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!" ¹²Therefore prophesy and say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.'""
 (Ezek. 37:11-12)

4.) Then the Great White Throne judgment will take place. Those not found written in the Book of Life will be cast into the lake of fire. Those whose names are found in the Book of Life will be given immortality in the *Olam Haba* (the World to Come). The final cleansing of the earth will then be complete:

"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¹³The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."
 (Rev. 20:11-15)

These events are all part of the final cleansing ritual that takes place at the end of the Millennium, just prior to the New Beginning pictured by the Eighth Day. Once these events are completed, God is ready to focus on reestablishing *Gan Eden* (Gahn Ee-dehn' = Garden of Eden or Paradise) on earth. However, there will no longer be a Satan (*HaSatan*), a deceiver, and there will be no physical humans left who can be deceived the way Adam and Eve were in the Garden:

"Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD [YHVH] God [Elohim] had made. And he said to the woman, 'Has God indeed said, "You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"'

¹² And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; ³ but of the fruit of the tree

which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, "You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die."

"⁴ Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'

"⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings" (Gen. 3:1-7)

At this point in time the earth will have been restored to its original state, as it was when Adam and Eve were first created. But instead of there being just two physical human beings, there will now be a myriad of spirit beings -- humans given immortality because of their acceptance of the blood of *Y'shua* as payment for their sins:

"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written:

'Death is swallowed up in victory.

⁵⁵ O Death, where is your sting?

O Hades, where is your victory?'

"⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ [*Y'shua HaMashiach*]." (I Cor. 15:53-57)

All are now either Spirit, just like their Father and their brother *Y'shua*, or they are dust and ashes from being burned up in the lake of fire:

"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (I John 3:2)

~ The New Beginning ~

Once this great cleansing has been completed, the children of God are ready for their permanent home. The Groom (*Y'shua*) and His Bride (those who have been given eternal life) are fully married (that took place at the beginning of the Millennium) and they have completed their thousand year wedding celebration, as pictured by *Sukkot*. What is left is to move into their new home:

"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (Rev. 21:1-2)

The purification is now complete. All of the wicked and unclean have been either cleansed or destroyed. The Bride of Messiah dwells in complete purity with her husband King

Y'shua. He was clean and sinless from the beginning (except for that brief period of time when He voluntarily took His future Bride's sins upon Himself so that she too could be cleansed and live). Now His Bride is also clean and sinless, for her uncleanness and sin has been totally removed. She is not like the house of Israel and the house of Judah whom God betrothed in the wilderness. They were sinners from the beginning. Yet we have really come full circle, because, in fact, the New Beginning Bride is the whole house of Israel:

"And so all Israel shall be saved." (Rom. 11:26a)

What is most remarkable, is that God revealed this entire story to us back in the book of Genesis. When *Ya'akov* (Jacob) wrestled with the 'man' at Peniel on the eve of *Yom Kippur*. It was here that he said:

"... I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." (Gen. 32:30)

The phrase "face to face" is a Hebrew idiom which stands for the Day of Atonement, for that was the day the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies and performed purification rituals before the Ark of the Covenant, so that Israel could be cleansed of their sins.

The next day, when *Ya'akov* met Esau, it was still the Day of Atonement and would have been the approximate time of day when the High Priest would later be performing the *Yom Kippur* service. But Esau had never encountered God "face to face" the way his brother had done. So Esau, representing the hairy *Azazel* goat, returned to his wilderness home, *Seir* (which means a shaggy goat) and remained there carrying sin on his head. Meanwhile, *Ya'akov* went on to the symbolic wedding supper, the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*), where he built *Sukkot* (shelters) for his cattle. But he also played out another role while he was there. While *Ya'akov* built temporary dwellings for his cattle, he also constructed a permanent house for himself:

"And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, built himself a house, and made booths [*sukkot*] for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth." (Gen. 33:17)

Ya'akov's house represented the permanent house which is to be built for the Bride of Messiah following immediately after the 1000 year temporary dwelling represented by the Feast of Tabernacles. This permanent house is the New Jerusalem which will be brought down from heaven and in which King Messiah and His Bride will dwell for all eternity. It now becomes clear why the Jews have the tradition that *Ya'akov* (Jacob) was the first man to celebrate *Shemini Atzeret*.

Let us all give thanks and rejoice, for we know what a wonderful life and home that God the Father and *Y'shua HaMashiach* have planned for us.

~ Eye Has Not Seen ~

There is a description of the New Jerusalem given in Revelation 21 and 22. However, it is so fantastic that words can only give a hint as to what it will really be like:

**"But as it is written:
'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
Nor have entered into the heart of man
The things which God has prepared for those who love
Him.'**

**"¹⁰ But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit.
For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of
God."
(I Cor. 2:9-10)**

Not only will *Y'shua* dwell with His Bride in the New
Heavens and the New Earth, our Father will also come to dwell
there with us:

**"And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold,
the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with
them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be
with them *and be* their God.'"
(Rev. 21:3)**

There will be no need for a temple in the New Jerusalem
for God Himself will dwell there and *Y'shua* will provide the
illumination needed to light the city:

**"But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty
and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ The city had no need of the
sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God
illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light."
(Rev. 21:22-23)**

All of the troubles found in this present evil world will be
gone and forgotten, for God will comfort all of His children:

**"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes;
there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying.
There shall be no more pain, for the former things have
passed away."
(Rev. 21:4)**

Evil people will not be allowed to live in the New
Jerusalem, for they will all have been given eternal death; being
cast into the Lake of Fire and burned up:

**"But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable,
murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all
liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire
and brimstone, which is the second death."
(Rev. 21:8)**

New Jerusalem will be the abode of those who have
overcome the world through the blood of the Lamb and the
power of the *Ruach HaKodesh*:

**"Then He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make
all things new.' And He said to me, 'Write, for these words
are true and faithful.' ⁶ And He said to me, 'It is done! I
am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.
I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him
who thirsts. ⁷ He who overcomes shall inherit all things,
and I will be his God and he shall be My son.'"
(Rev. 21:5-7)**

The people who will dwell forever in New Jerusalem will
have come from all nations, and kings will be included in their
number. It does not matter who they might have been in their
physical lives. If their name is in the book of Life, they will be
there:

**"And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in
its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and
honor into it. ²⁵ Its gates shall not be shut at all by day
(there shall be no night there). ²⁶ And they shall bring the
glory and the honor of the nations into it. ²⁷ But there shall
by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an
abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the
Lamb's Book of Life."
(Rev. 21:24-27)**

The Tree of Life will be restored to the people and they
will partake of it and the nations will be healed:

**"And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear
as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the
Lamb. ² In the middle of its street, and on either side of the
river, *was* the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each *tree*
yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree *were*
for the healing of the nations."
(Rev. 22:1-2)**

In that day and time everyone will see God "face to face,"
for all will have access to Him:

**"And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of
God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall
serve Him. ⁴ They shall see His face, and His name *shall be*
on their foreheads. ⁵ There shall be no night there: They
need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives
them light. And they shall reign forever and ever."
(Rev. 22:3-5)**

~ Summary ~

Shemini Atzeret is not an obscure Festival tacked on at the
end of *Sukkot*. It is a wonderful standalone Festival that
pictures the completion of all that we, as Messianic Believers in
Y'shua long for and await with eager anticipation.

Shemini Atzeret is the culmination of all things. It is a
New Beginning which will propel God's people into a whole
new realm of existence and understanding. Some of these
concepts are difficult for us, as physical human beings, to get
our minds around. However, like the apostle Paul, (*Sha'ul*) we
pray that each one of you will be blessed with enlightenment
from God, so that:

**"... the God of our Lord Jesus Christ [*Y'shua*
HaMashiach], the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit
of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ the
eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you
may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the
riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and
what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us
who believe, according to the working of His mighty power
²⁰ which He worked in Christ [*Messiah*] when He raised
Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the
heavenly *places*, ²¹ far above all principality and power and
might and dominion, and every name that is named, not
only in this age but also in that which is to come."
(Eph. 1:15-21)**

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