

# This is the time of our rejoicing, Z'man Simchateinu

*“And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before יהוה your Elohim seven days.” (Lev 23:40)*

**T**'ABERNACLES (*SUKKOT*) IS THE SEASON OF OUR JOY (Z'MAN SIMCHATEINU) AND A **THE** FESTIVAL OF THE MOADIM CYCLE. In Leviticus 23:34 יהוה commanded Moshe to observe the *Feast of יהוה* known as *Sukkot*, or the Feast of Ingathering, starting on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month in the Hebrew civil year. This feast is also known as the Feast of Joy (the Hebrew word *simcha*). This day begins an 8-day period from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup> of *Tishri*, followed by the day of rejoicing in the Torah (*Simchat Torah*). These eight days are known collectively as the days of our rejoicing or the days of gladness. Major events have taken place during this festival throughout Scripture and they serve to accentuate the importance of this *moadim* to יהוה.

## **The Feast of the Messiah's Birth**

*Sukkot* is the time prophesied by Isaiah when the entire world would see the light, that is, the salvation of יהוה, our Messiah *Yeshua*. We would expect that יהוה *Eloheinu* would reveal these details to His servants the *Nevi'im* as it is written: “Surely יהוה *Eloheinu* will do nothing, but he reveals his secret unto his servants the prophets.” (Amos 3:7) Indeed, the events which surround the greatest gift given to mankind were revealed to *Isaiah*.

*“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil...For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” (Isa 9:2-3; 6)*

## **The Feast that Messiah Revealed Himself**

The *B'rit Chadasha* records an incident during the Feast of *Sukkot* that merits our attention. During the water libation ritual *Yeshua* stood up and cried out declaring that He was *Mayim Chaim* (living water):

*Sukkot is a time of simcha, and what a rejoicing there was in the Beit Hamikdash on Sukkot. Especially, during the Simchat Beit Hashoeyvah—the Celebration of Drawing the Water. Water is a blessing. No one can live without water. Therefore, on Sukkot (which is the beginning of the rainy season in the Land of Israel) we ask Hashem to send enough rain and water for the entire world. Each evening during Chol Hamoed Succot (the intermediary days of the Feast of Sukkot), a great celebration was held in the Temple. Tens of thousands of people came. The golden lamps were lit. The Leviim sang and played their harps and lyres and cymbals. The people danced all night long holding torches and singing songs of praise to Hashem. All of Jerusalem rejoiced. Then, just as the roosters began to crow and announce the beginning of a new day, the people marched out of the Beit Hamikdash and down to the pool of Shiloach, an ancient spring of water outside the walls of the city. They drew up pitchers of cold, pure water from the spring and brought them back to the Temple. They prayed the morning prayers, brought the daily offering, and then poured the water from the Shiloach on the mizbeach—the alter in the Beit Hamikdash. The Rabbis state that “Whoever has not seen the joy of Simchat Beit Hashoeyvah has never seen joy in his life!” (ArtScroll Sukkot Children's Holiday Series, 1991)*

Imagine the festivities, it was morning, right after the *Shaharit* service... *Yeshua* was there but not everyone knew He was coming. He apparently spent several days at the Temple teaching the people. Night after night and day after day, they would rehearse the water libation ceremony and ask *Hashem* to bring the rain that the entire world needs! Can you see how it must have been for our Messiah? They were praying for the rain to come, but the answer to the prayer was standing there, literally!

*“<sup>2</sup>But the festival of Sukkot in Y'hudah was near; <sup>3</sup>so his brothers said to him, “Leave here and go into Y'hudah, so that your talmidim can see the miracles you do...Not until the festival was half over did Yeshua go up to the Temple courts and begin to teach...Now on the last day of the festival, Hoshana Rabbah, Yeshua stood and cried out, “If anyone is thirsty, let him keep coming to me and drinking!” <sup>38</sup>Whoever puts his trust in me, as the Scripture*

says, rivers of living water will flow from his inmost being!"<sup>39</sup> (Now he said this about the Spirit, whom those who trusted in him were to receive later—the Spirit had not yet been given, because Yeshua had not yet been glorified.)<sup>40</sup> On hearing his words, some people in the crowd said, "Surely this man is 'the prophet';"<sup>41</sup> others said, "This is the Messiah." But others said, "How can the Messiah come from the Galil?"<sup>42</sup> Doesn't the Tanakh say that the Messiah is from the seed of David and comes from Beit-Lechem, the village where David lived?" (John 7:2-3; 14-15; 37-42)

### **The Feast that Recalls that Messiah (Elohim's Tabernacle) is with man**

Another important theme is that of having the Divine Presence dwell with us. The English word "dwell" is the word "*sukkah*" in Hebrew. Why did יהוה ask us to dwell in *sukkot* (booths)?

יהוה gave them new homes to live in—a different kind of home. He gave them *sukkot*. Some of our Rabbis say the *sukkot* were real huts, made of wood or branches or material. Others say they were made of clouds! יהוה changed the shape of the *Ananei Hakavod*—the pillar of clouds which moved before the people—and turned them into small booths. That's why the *Torah* tells us: "You shall sit in *sukkot* for seven days... so that your children will know that I placed the Children of Israel in booths when I took them out of the land of Mitzraim...I am Hashem, your Elohim (Lev. 23:43)." (ArtScroll Sukkot, *ibid*)

In the desert יהוה dwelt with us in the *Beit Hamikdash*. Would Yeshua dwell with us also? Of course He does. This is why Yochanan states:

*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt (tabernacled) 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)*

Thus, *Sukkot* reminds us that Messiah Yeshua is the tabernacle of *Elohim* which is with man and that He will forever be present with us. Thus, we are "the people who lived in darkness who have seen a great light and those who dwell in the shadow of death to them has this light shined..." (Kol Simcha Song)

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of יהוה is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and יהוה himself shall be with them, and be their Elohim... And I saw no temple therein: for the יהוה El Gibor and the Lamb are the temple of it." (Rev 21:3,22)

### **Sukkot - The Feast of Dedication of the First Temple & the Shekinah**

"Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of יהוה out of the city of David, which is Zion. And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month. (1 Kings 8:1-2) (See also II Chro. 5, Neh. 8:14-18)

### **The First Festival Observed by Israel upon returning from the Babilonian Captivity**

<sup>14</sup>They found written in the *Torah* that ADONAI had ordered through Moshe that the people of Isra'el were to live in *sukkot* during the feast of the seventh month;<sup>15</sup> and that they were to announce and pass the word in all their cities and in Yerushalayim, "Go out to the mountains, and collect branches of olives, wild olives, myrtles, palms, and other leafy trees to make *sukkot*, as prescribed." <sup>16</sup>So the people went out, brought them and made *sukkot* for themselves, each one on the roof of his house, also in their courtyards, in the courtyards of the house of God, in the open space by the Water Gate and in the open space by the Efrayim Gate. <sup>17</sup>The entire community of those who had returned from the exile made *sukkot* and lived in the *sukkot*, for the people of Isra'el had not done this since the days of Yehoshua the son of Nun. So there was very great joy. <sup>18</sup>Also they read every day, from the first day until the last day, in the scroll of the *Torah* of God. They kept the feast for seven days; then on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the rule. (Neh 8:14-18)

### **The Time of the Restoration of the Second Temple**

<sup>1</sup>On the twenty-first day of the seventh month, this word of יהוה came through Hagai the prophet: <sup>2</sup>"Speak now to Z'rubavel the son of Sh'alti'el, governor of Y'hudah, and to Y'hoshua the son of Y'hotzadak, the cohen hagadol, and to the rest of the people; say this to them: <sup>3</sup>"Who among you is left that saw this house in its former glory? And how does it look to you now? It seems like nothing to you, doesn't it? <sup>4</sup>Nevertheless, Z'rubavel, take courage now," says יהוה; "and take courage, Y'hoshua the son of Y'hotzadak, the cohen hagadol; and take courage, all you people of the land," says יהוה; "and get to work! For I am with you," says יהוה-Tzva'ot. <sup>5</sup>"This is in keeping with the word that I promised in a

*covenant with you when you came out of Egypt, and my Spirit remains with you, so don't be afraid!"* <sup>6</sup>*For this is what יהוה-Tzva'ot says: "It won't be long before one more time I will shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land; <sup>7</sup>and I will shake all the nations, so that the treasures of all the nations will flow in; and I will fill this house with glory," says יהוה-Tzva'ot. <sup>8</sup>"The silver is mine, and the gold is mine," says יהוה-Tzva'ot. <sup>9</sup>"The glory of this new house will surpass that of the old," says יהוה-Tzva'ot, "and in this place I will grant shalom," says יהוה-Tzva'ot.'*