



# Preparing The Way

Messianic Jewish Teachings with Kevin Geoffrey

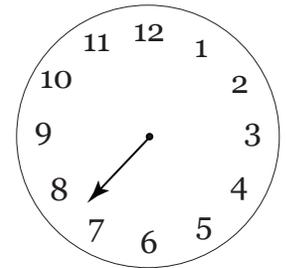
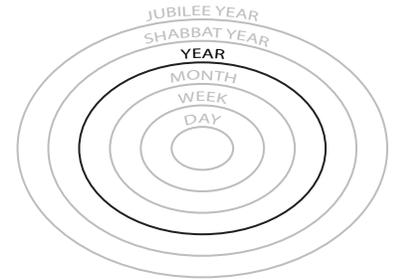
## Chag HaSukot (and Yom HaSh'miyniy 'Atzeret)

### I. Introduction

- a. Review—The Seventh Month
  - i. Yom T'ruah—Day of Loud Blasts [of Sound]—1st of 7th month; summer harvest... need an awakening, preparation for the month
  - ii. Yom HaKipurim—Day of the Atonements—10th of 7th month; deny ourselves, remember the One who has given us life
- b. Sukot—Final feast of the year
  - i. Many traditions associated with it, but not as widely observed as the “high holidays”
  - ii. Approach: Rather than looking first at Jewish tradition, see what Scripture says, then discuss Jewish traditions as they relate to Scriptural prescriptions

### II. What Scripture Says

- a. Exodus 23:14-17
  - i. Three feasts: Matzah; הקציר בכורי, HaKatzir Bikurei (The Harvest of Firstfruits a.k.a. Shavuot); חג האסוף, Chag HaAsif (Feast of Ingathering a.k.a Sukot)
  - ii. בצאת השנה, B'tzet HaShanah—in [the] outgoing [of] the year
    - 1. Exodus 34:22, “Do... the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year.”
    - 2. תקופת השנה, T'kufat HaShanah—coming around (circuit) [of] the year
  - iii. The end/turn of the agricultural year, the completion of bringing in all the year’s harvest. The cycle ends and begins anew with planting, ploughing, etc.
- b. Leviticus
  - i. Leviticus 23:33-34
    - 1. Begins 15th day of 7th month
    - 2. חג הסוכות, Chag HaSukot—Feast [of] the [Temporary] Shelters (sometimes Feast of Booths, Feast of Tabernacles, but “tabernacle” is inaccurate—משכן, mish'kan)
    - 3. Lasts for seven days—just like Feast of Matzah
  - ii. Leviticus 23:35—first day holy convocation/sacred assembly and no work day (unlike Matzah, only first day is no work day)
  - iii. Leviticus 23:36
    - 1. Commands for offerings for seven days
    - 2. A sacred assembly, offering, no work day on the eighth day, called עֲצֵרֶת, 'Atzeret. The feast is only 7 days. We'll talk about this more.
  - iv. Leviticus 23:37-38—appear to be a parenthetical, premature close of chapter 23, because it picks up again with Sukot in the next verse
  - v. Leviticus 23:39—reiterates, adds “shabbaton” for 1st and 8th days; חגג, Chagag—celebrate, feast, dance, reel (from too much wine?)



vi. Leviticus 23:40

1. Command to rejoice before Adonai on the first day
2. How to rejoice: by taking choice fruit from trees, palm fronds, leafy branches, river willows. What do we do with them?
  - a. Judaism's (religious) answer: lulav (bound palm, myrtle and willow) and etrog (citrus fruit, like a lemon or orange); though only the palm is explicitly mentioned in Scripture
  - b. While reciting the Hallel, waved in the four cardinal directions, and toward heaven and earth. Why? Presumably a way of beseeching God (because God is everywhere) to bless the land with rain. Also, since waving the four species is extra-Biblical, may alternatively come from the superstition that waving keeps away the evil spirits (Kolatch p. 145-146)
  - c. Scripture just says "rejoice" with them. How? We'll come back to that.

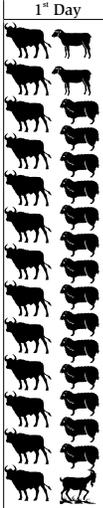
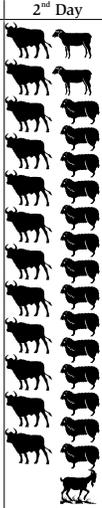
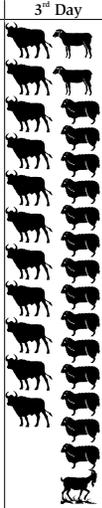
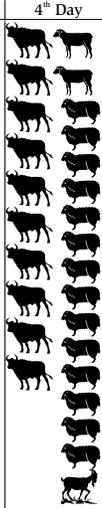
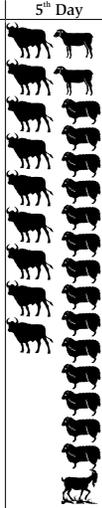
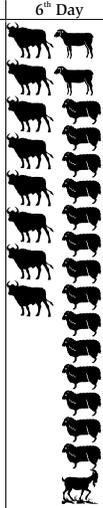
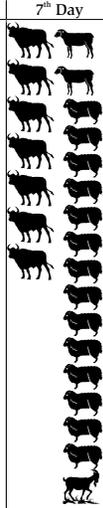
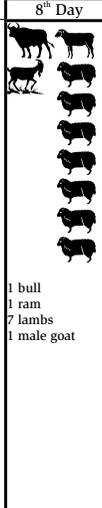
vii. Leviticus 23:41—reiteration, plus "lasting ordinance"

viii. Leviticus 23:42-43—all native-born are to live (dwell, remain, sit, abide) in Sukot for 7 days. Why? "So your descendents will know that I had the Israelites live in sukot when I brought them out of Egypt."—Reminder of how Adonai provided for us

- c. Numbers 29:12-34—verse 12 reiterates, the rest outlines the offerings; verse 35, יום השמיני עֲצֶרֶת, Yom HaSh'miyni 'Atzeret (The Eighth Day [Closing] Assembly)

**Sukkot Sacrifices**

(B' midbar [Numbers] 29:12-38)

1 <sup>st</sup> Day	2 <sup>nd</sup> Day	3 <sup>rd</sup> Day	4 <sup>th</sup> Day	5 <sup>th</sup> Day	6 <sup>th</sup> Day	7 <sup>th</sup> Day	8 <sup>th</sup> Day
							
13 bulls 2 rams 14 lambs 1 male goat	12 bulls 2 rams 14 lambs 1 male goat	11 bulls 2 rams 14 lambs 1 male goat	10 bulls 2 rams 14 lambs 1 male goat	9 bulls 2 rams 14 lambs 1 male goat	8 bulls 2 rams 14 lambs 1 male goat	7 bulls 2 rams 14 lambs 1 male goat	= 70 bulls = 14 rams = 98 lambs = 7 male goats

d. Deuteronomy

- i. Deuteronomy 16:13—speaks again of ingathering
- ii. Deuteronomy 16:14—command again to rejoice; everyone in Israel
- iii. Deuteronomy 16:15—for seven days in Jerusalem (the place the Lord will choose); joy comes from the blessing of harvest and the work of our hands

- e. Summary so far
  - i. Sukot begins 15th day of the 7th month
  - ii. Lasts for seven days, the first day is a holy convocation/rest day/no work day like Yom T’ruah
  - iii. Called Feast of Sukot, also, Feast of Ingathering; closes the annual harvest cycle
  - iv. To be celebrated in Jerusalem
  - v. Four primary commands
    - 1. Live in sukot for seven days (all native-born)
    - 2. Make sacrifices for each of the seven days
    - 3. Celebrate (chagag)
    - 4. Rejoice (to include the species of flora, though it doesn’t say how it is to be used)
  - vi. After the feast is over, there is an eighth day closing assembly, that is also a holy convocation/rest day/no work day, like the first day

### III. More from Scripture

- a. Nehemiah—How they did Sukot
  - i. Nehemiah 8:13-14—Ezra and the Levites “rediscover” Sukot
  - ii. Nehemiah 8:15-16—made sukot out of foliage found in the hill country of Jerusalem; sukot were everywhere!
    - 1. Nehemiah’s list does not match Leviticus. Did they get it wrong? Or is the Leviticus list a general reference to Jerusalem flora?
    - 2. Leviticus says to rejoice on the first day with the flora species. Nehemiah says they used the foliage to make their sukot “as it is written.” What does this suggest?
  - iii. Nehemiah 8:17—First celebration of Sukot since Joshua (about 1,000 years); their joy was very great
  - iv. Nehemiah 8:18—They read Torah every day of the feast
- b. Jonah 4:5—What’s a sukah?
  - i. Then Jonah went out from the city and sat east of it. There he made a shelter (sukah) for himself and sat under it in the shade until he could see what would happen in the city.
  - ii. A sukah provides shade. Apparently, according to Nehemiah (and Leviticus), it’s made from the surrounding trees, plants, and naturally growing, native foliage.
  - iii. In Judaism, it must have a roof that is “sufficiently sparse to permit the stars to be visible from within” (Kolatch), though no such explicit instructions are offered in Scripture. Does Scripture therefore allow creativity with Sukah design?
  - iv. Side note: a hotel is not a “temporary dwelling.”
- c. Prophetic Theme of Sukot—Feast for all the Nations
  - i. Zechariah 14:16-19
    - 1. Context: the Day of the Lord, and the permanent reign of Adonai—the nations will fight against Jerusalem, but Adonai will come and fight for Israel, securing Jerusalem forever.
    - 2. All the survivors of the nations that attacked Jerusalem will be required to go to Jerusalem annually for the feast to worship Adonai. Why would anyone not want to go? The passage implies that some will not want to. The point: At the turning of history (perhaps symbolized in the prophecy by Sukot, the Feast at the turning of the year), the nations, too will be gathered to the Lord.

- ii. Haggai 2:6-7—similar vein as Zechariah
  - 1. Prophecy received during the end of the Feast (2:1)
  - 2. “The desired [things] of all the nations will come”
- iii. Amos 9:11/Acts 15:12-19—may echo these
  - 1. The Gentiles are coming into the kingdom (an end-time event)
  - 2. James sees a connection to the fallen sukah of David (as per Amos)—its rebuilding and restoration is the restoration of the nations to God
    - a. The “tabernacle (mish’kan) of David” refers to the end of Adonai’s temporary dwelling with Israel and His taking up permanent habitation in the Temple in Jerusalem.
    - b. It is intriguing to extend the connection between the sukah and the mish’kan by considering John 1:14, “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us...” where “dwelt” translates the Greek *skenoo*, the LXX equivalent of both mish’kan and sukah. Consider also Revelation 21:3-4.
- iv. The point: Sukot is prophetically linked to Yeshua’s and Israel’s ultimate purpose: the reconciliation of the nations to God—that Gentiles coming to Adonai is the fullness of a spiritual ingathering.

#### IV. Yeshua—Our Salvation

- a. John 7:37-39 (Context: Sukot—see 7:2)
- b. “Hoshanna Rabba”—“The Great ‘Save Us’”—extra-Biblical celebration. By Yeshua’s day, the pomp and circumstance of Sukot had become quite elaborate. Sukot changed from being a celebration of Adonai’s faithfulness to a festival of supplication—pleading with Adonai for continued provision. This was marked by the Simchat Bet Hasho-ayva (Celebration of Water Libation). During the celebration, water was poured on the altar as a petition for a rainy season. Hoshanna Rabba, also considered the Day of Judgment for Rain, represented one final opportunity for [any] evil decree to be reversed. (Kolatch, 255)
- c. Yeshua turns it on its head. There was no need to plead for salvation—Salvation had already been sent! Yeshua does not “fulfill” Hoshanna Rabba—IMO, He shows why it is unnecessary.

#### V. Simple Summary

- a. Sukot—7-day end-of-year blow out celebrating another year of God’s provision. Other themes: protection, deliverance, and prophetic implications for global reconciliation
- b. The 8th day—wind down after the celebration (see 2Chr.7:8-10), time to reflect on the previous year and look forward to the next. (Side note: Simchat Torah)

#### VI. How Do We Do It?

- a. Overflowing joy that comes from the realization that nothing and no one can care for or protect us but the Mighty One of Israel
- b. A simple Sukot: live in a sukah for seven days, celebrate and rejoice. Consider a family vacation.
- c. Deuteronomy 16:13-15