

Sukkot & Shemini Atzeret

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES
& THE EIGHTH DAY

The Historical Roots of Our Faith, Present Relevance for Believers & Prophetic End-Time Implications

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Spiritual and Ceremonial Aspects of Sukkot

Overview of the Season

SUKKOT (ALSO SPELLED “SUCCOTH”) OR THE FEAST OF TABERNACLE/BOOTHES or Ingathering is the sixth of the seven annual feast days in YHVH’s plan of redemption for mankind. It occurs in the early fall of the year on the fifteenth day of the seventh month on YHVH’s biblical calendar fifteen days after Yom Teruah (the Day of Shofar Blowing) and five days after Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement). This festival lasts for seven days and directly following it is a separate festival called *Shemini Atzeret* literally meaning “the Eighth Solemn Assembly” and commonly referred to as “the Eighth Day.”

We see in the early fall a rapid succession of biblical feasts with one coming right after another. It is a time of great energy, excitement and anticipation both in the natural realm and prophetically.

We also observe a transition from the somber and repentant, even frightening, mood of Yom Teruah and Yom Kippur to the joyous and celebratory mood of the Feast of Sukkot, and no wonder, for the first two fall festivals of YHVH represent a very dark and ominous time in human history—the end of the age with the judgments of Elohim being poured out upon the earth (Great Tribulation, Wrath of Elohim, Battle of Armageddon, and Satan being bound and cast into the bottomless pit). But this same period culminates in the return of the Messiah, Yeshua, to rule the earth during the Messianic Age as King of kings and Master of masters. The Feast of Tabernacles pictures this glorious epoch in the history of humanity’s tenure upon this earth—a time of unspeakable joy and triumph of good over evil, righteousness over wickedness, the children of light over the children of darkness, love over hate, and the truth of YHVH (epitomized by Yeshua) over the lies of Satan.

Thus Saith YHVH’s Word on the Feast of Tabernacles and the Eighth Day

Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto YHVH. ³⁵ On the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. ³⁶ Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto YHVH: on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto YHVH: it is a solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work therein. ³⁷ These are the feasts of YHVH, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto YHVH, a burnt offering, and a meat offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, every thing upon his day: ³⁸ Beside the sabbaths of YHVH, and beside your gifts, and beside all your vows, and beside all your freewill offerings, which ye give unto YHVH. ³⁹ Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto YHVH seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath. ⁴⁰ 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 YHVH your Elohim seven days. ⁴¹ And ye shall keep it

a feast unto YHVH seven days in the year. It shall be a statute for ever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. ⁴² Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths: ⁴³ That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am YHVH your Elohim. (Lev 23:34-43)

Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. ¹⁵ Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:) ¹⁶ And the feast of harvest, the first fruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field. ¹⁷ Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Adon YHVH. (Exod 23:14-17)

And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work, and ye shall keep a feast unto YHVH seven days ... [all the sacrifices and offerings are to be made on these days are then listed] ³⁵ On the eighth day ye shall have a solemn assembly: ye shall do no servile work therein ... [the sacrifices and offerings that are to be made on this day are then listed]. (Num 29:12,35)

Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine: ¹⁴ And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates. ¹⁵ Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto YHVH thy Elohim in the place which YHVH shall choose: because YHVH thy Elohim shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice. ¹⁶ Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before YHVH thy Elohim in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before YHVH empty: ¹⁷ Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of YHVH thy Elohim which he hath given thee. (Deut 16: 13-17)

And they found written in the law which YHVH had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month: ¹⁵ And that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written. ¹⁶ So the people went forth, and brought them, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of Elohim, and in the street of the water gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim. ¹⁷ And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness. ¹⁸ Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of Elohim. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according unto the manner. (Neh 8: 14-18)

And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, YHVH of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. ¹⁷ And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, YHVH of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. ¹⁸ And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith YHVH will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. ¹⁹ This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. (Zech 14: 16-19)

Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. ¹⁰ But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. ¹¹ Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? ¹⁴ Now about the midst of the feast Yeshua went up into the temple, and taught. ³⁷ In the last day, that great day of the feast, Yeshua stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. ³⁸ He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. ³⁹ (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Set-apart Spirit was not yet given; because that Yeshua was not yet glorified.) (John 7: 2,10,11,14,37-39)

Meaning of the Word Sukkot

The word *sukkot* (plural of *sukkah*) is Hebrew for “tabernacles, booths, or any tent-like temporary dwelling.” The Tabernacle or Mishkan that YHVH commanded Moses to construct in the wilderness was a *sukkah* — literally, a portable tent or habitation for YHVH himself. In fact, the time period of the Feast of Sukkot marks the beginning of Israel's construction of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle), for Moses received the second tablets containing the Ten Statements of YHVH on Yom Teruah and it was immediately after this that the Torah records that the Israelites began building the Tabernacle.

The Sukkah

The *sukkah*, a flimsy, tent-like dwelling, represents the frailty of man's physical life, for the physical body of man is nothing more than a “temporary dwelling” in which mortal man lives (2 Cor 5:1-6) until physical death occurs followed by the resurrection of the Saints into eternal life.

While in this physical state man must totally depend upon his Creator for everything, without whom we would perish both physically and spiritually in this wilderness in which we find ourselves called *life*. This is exactly the lesson we learn from the Children of Israel's experience during 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. They depended totally upon YHVH for food, water, clothing and protection from the heat, cold and their enemies.

YHVH Sukkah-ed With His People

But YHVH desires to dwell among his people. In the past, he did not choose to dwell in a mansion or castle, but a tent, just like his people—the Tent of Meeting, or Tabernacle in the wilderness, as it is variously called. Literally, YHVH sukka-ed over his people in the pillar of fire which rested over the Tent of Meeting or Mishkan. YHVH sukka-ing in his people is beautifully pictured on the Day of Pentecost in Acts chapter two when the same spiritual fire of YHVH came to dwell this time in the hearts of Believers as Yeshua predicted (John 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7,13; Acts 1:5,8).

Yeshua (Emmanuel) Sukkahs With Us At His First and Second Comings

In fact, Yeshua's first coming was YHVH sukka-ing with his people, for we see that Yeshua is none other than YHVH of old who lead the Children of Israel in the wilderness (1 Cor 10:1-4) while sukka-ing with them. Likewise in John 1:14 we read that “the Word [YHVH-Yeshua] was made flesh and dwelt among us ...”

The word *dwelt* (*Strong's* G4637) literally means “to tent or tabernacle, i.e., to sukka.” Yeshua was Emmanuel, or El (Elohim) with us, (Matt 1:23), that is, El tabernacling with us. To emphasize this point, Scripture tells us that Yeshua, who was given a mortal body (Phil 2:7), or sukka, and was literally born in a sukka (or “manger”) during the Feast of Sukkot. Then, to cap off this wonderful symbolism, in the future, the set-apart (*kadosh*) City of New Jerusalem will descend to this earth (like a sukka over the people of YHVH) after the conclusion of the Messianic Age (Millennium) and Revelation 21:3 says, “Behold, the tabernacle [*Strong's* G4633, literally “sukka”] of Elohim is with men and he shall dwell/*sukkah* [*Strong's* G4637; the same word as used in John. 1:14] with them and they shall be his people, and Elohim himself shall be with them, and be their Elohim” (see also Rev 7:15).

Clearly, the sukka plays a key role in YHVH relating to his people, his desire to commune and have relationship with them and the presence of his glory among his people. In fact, in Hebraic thought the cloud that covered Ancient Israel in the wilderness is viewed as a *chuppah* or wedding canopy in a Jewish wedding, which is nothing more than a *talit* (prayer shawl) or little tent or sukka. We see this marriage analogy in Ezekiel 16:8 where YHVH says that he spread his skirt over Israel and covered her nakedness. The word “skirt” is the Hebrew word *kanaph* which speaks of the “wings” or corners of a wedding *chuppah* or *talit* (small tent or prayer shawl).

Some Additional Concepts Regarding the Sukkah

- ☞ Yeshua tabernacled (sukkah) among his people (John 1:14) and he was the true tabernacle (Heb 9:11).
- ☞ Scripture likens our physical bodies to a physical sukkah (2 Cor 5:1-5; 2 Pet 1:13-14).
- ☞ The Tabernacle of Moses in the wilderness is called the “Tent of Habitation” (Acts 7:44; Heb 9:2-8).
- ☞ The Patriarchs lived in tents (tabernacles) (Heb 11:8-9).
- ☞ Scripture speaks of a heavenly tabernacle (Heb 8:1-2; Rev 13:6; 15:5). This tabernacle will come down to earth (Rev 21:1-3).
- ☞ When the Children of Israel left Egypt they lived in tents or sukkahs (plural: *sukkot*) on their way to the Promised Land. This was to emphasize the fact that while the saints of the Most High live on this earth they are pilgrims and sojourners, they are in the world and not of the world (John 17:11 and 14) and are just passing through on their way to a heavenly kingdom.

The Feast of Tabernacles Is the Feast of Ingathering and the Millennium

The Feast of Sukkot is also called the Feast of Ingathering (Exod 23:16) and is literally a harvest festival where the celebrants are rejoicing over a successful and fruitful fall harvest. It marks the final ingathering of the year’s produce. In the prophetic sense, this harvest pictures the spiritual harvest to occur at the end of the age—a harvest of souls. The book of Revelation speaks of 144,000 as well as a great and innumerable multitude who have been saved out of the Great Tribulation period just prior to the return of the Messiah (Rev 14:1-5; 7:9-17). Furthermore, during the Messianic Age physical humans will inhabit the earth who will be having children. Many will be brought into the family of YHVH through Yeshua at this time, as well.

The Millennium and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb

During the Millennium, the wedding supper of the Lamb occurs. In Revelation 19:7-9 we read, “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he says unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he says unto me, These are the true sayings of Elohim.” This occurs during the Feast of Tabernacles when Yeshua the Bridegroom returns to earth to marry his bride, the believing Saints, where he will rule over the earth as the King of kings and Lord of lords. The Saints will rule with him as kings and priests. We see this pictured in the Jewish wedding feast where the bride and groom were viewed as king and queen and wore wedding crowns on their wedding day (Song 3:11; Isa 61:10; Ezek 16:12). The Millennium will literally be a 1000-year long marriage feast—literally the party to end all parties!

In general, Sukkot is a festival harvest which pictures the harvest of the nations in the Messianic Age when all nations will be brought into YHVH’s kingdom. Peace, brotherhood and righteousness will characterize life on this earth. All nations will be expected to come up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles (Zech 14:16-17). Should they fail to do so they will be punished.

The Wedding Feast/Marriage Supper of the Lamb: Past, Present and Future

The Feast of Tabernacles is the sixth of the seven annual festival on YHVH’s sacred biblical Hebrew calendar. This sixth festival also corresponds with the sixth step in the biblical Jewish wedding ceremony (for a full treatment of this subject please see my teaching article entitled *The Bible: The Good News – The Story of Two Lovers & YHVH’s Set-apart Feast Days Which Are the Outline of that Love Story—a Plan of Redemption*), and pictures the wedding supper of the Yeshua, the Lamb of Elohim celebrating his spiritual marriage to his people Israel.

YHVH first married the Children of Israel at the foot of Mount Sinai. After YHVH formalized his marriage covenant with Israel the leaders of Israel feasted before YHVH at the foot of Mount Sinai: “And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw Elohim, and did eat and drink.” (Exod 24:11).

At the beginning of the wedding feast, the newlyweds would consummate the marriage in the wedding chamber (chupah, which was like a sukkah). The Sabbath was the sign of the covenant YHVH made with his people forever (Exod 31:13). It was a day for YHVH and his Bride to spend time together by putting aside the cares of this world to exist in a state of wedded bliss.

Not only does the weekly Sabbath picture the wedding feast, but so do three of the annual Sabbaths. This

occurs on the three *aliyot* (to go up) festivals (Passover, Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles) where the Israelites *went up* to Jerusalem to celebrate their allegiance to YHVH. The last celebration that occurs on the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot), which pictures the Millennium. As we previously noted, this glorious event is referred to in Revelation 19:7–9.

Ceremonies Occurring During the Feast of Sukkot and Their Meanings

Building and Living In the Sukkah

In Leviticus 23:33-43, YHVH gave instructions to the Israelites concerning celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles (Booths)/Sukkot. One of the key aspects and the namesake of this Fall festival was the construction of booths, temporary dwellings or sukkot (plural of sukkah).

You shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths/sukkot: That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths/*sukkot*, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am YHVH your Elohim. (Lev 23:42-43)

The Hebrew word *sukkah* (*Strong's* H5521 means “tabernacle, booth, pavilion, cottage, tent, a rude or temporary shelter.” Typically the temporary booth was constructed of tree limbs as noted in Leviticus 23:40,

And ye shall take you on the first day [of the Feast of Tabernacles] 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 YHVH your Elohim seven days.

In Nehemiah 8:14-17, we read of the post-exilic Jews keeping the Feast of Tabernacles and building *sukkot*:

And they found written in the law which YHVH had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month: and that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written. So the people went forth, and brought them, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of Elohim, and in the street of the water gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim. And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness.

Other than the above noted Scriptures relating to the construction of the sukkah and the temporary nature of it, Scripture is silent on the construction of a sukkah. For that we turn to the record of the rabbinic oral tradition called *The Mishnah* under “Appointed Time: Sukkah.” Here the ancient rabbis discuss the laws concerning the building of the sukkah at the Feast of Sukkot. For example, it is to be tall enough for a man to sit in, but not so tall as to be extravagant. It is to be a three sided structure. The roof, comprised of freshly cut tree limbs, is to allow 50 percent of the normal sunlight to pass through. Dead limbs or plant materials are acceptable as roofing material as long as they are not tied in bundles, though bundles sticks are permissible for the sukkah’s sides. A minimal amount of timber roofing is permissible, as long as the boards are neither too wide nor plastered and as long as one does not sleep under a board. The rabbis teach that one should eat some meals in the sukkah, but disagree as to how many. Woman, slaves and minors are exempt from the religious requirements of dwelling in a sukkah (unless a male minor can take care of himself). All seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles a person is to treat his sukkah as regular dwelling and his regular house as his temporary dwelling. If the weather is inclement so that staying in the sukkah is uncomfortable, then one is permitted to sleep in a house since feasts are to be joyous occasions. Stolen or dried up palm, willow, citron or myrtle branches are invalid for use on the sukkah.

These are a few of the traditional requirements concerning the sukkah. In Messianic movement, one will find many different interpretations as to the meaning of Leviticus 23:42-43. Some ignore the command to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles and to build a sukkah, while others actually leave their home and making aliyah to a designated (set-apart) place and keeping the festival for all eight days including building a sukkah. Some build a ceremonial sukkah in their backyard inviting friends to participate with them in “sukkah parties.” Others may even

go so far as to actually sleep and eat in their sukkah for all or part of the seven-day celebration. For those who go away for the Feast of Tabernacles, some build a sukkah and actually live in it, taking YHVH's commands quite literally. Some camp in a tent or recreational vehicle for a week while others stay in motels viewing this as their temporary dwelling. For Messianics Feast of Tabernacles organizers it is very common to allow festival participants to choose their own lodging (be it sukkah or condo, or living situation in between), yet build a large community sukkah encouraging the feast-goers to participate in activities therein, thus fulfilling the spirit of the Torah command to dwell for seven days in a sukkah. In some parts of the country where the weather is mild and sunny in the fall, living in tent or sukkah is more conducive. For those living in the mountains where the weather can be subfreezing at night, or in the coastal areas where it can be wet and stormy, living in a sukkah may not be possible. Remember, the land of Israel is approximately the same longitude as northern Baja California and the weather is similar. Living in a sukkah in Baja California in the fall is very different than doing so in Washington state, Montana or Maine!

The point of dwelling in a sukkah during the Feast of Sukkot is to remind us that we have left (spiritual) Egypt and that we are passing through the wilderness of life on our way to the Promised Land of the kingdom of Elohim. The wooden branches from which the sukkah is constructed represents humanity. Many times in Scripture, trees or wood is an allegory for humans. The most notable example of this is the Tabernacle in the wilderness where many of the posts and other furnishings of the Tabernacle were constructed of acacia wood capped in silver or covered in gold representing redeemed and spirit-born humanity. We live in frail bodies (temporary dwellings) awaiting the resurrection when our mortal tents (bodies) will be transformed into glorified spirit bodies. Life is fragile and humans are frail. We are totally dependent upon YHVH for all of our needs, both physically and spiritually. Living in a sukkah teaches us that our security is neither in what this life has to offer, nor in ourselves, but in our Maker. The sukkah is a flimsy structure to signify the fragility of life without the grace, provision and protection of YHVH. The sukkah is not a permanent house, neither is life on this earth, nor our human bodies. The roof of the sukkah is open to the stars in heaven. Likewise, we must never stop looking heavenward to the dwelling place of our Creator in whom we live and move and have our being.

Furthermore, living in a sukkah reminds us that YHVH himself chose to commune with the Israelites in a tent, chose to come earth to dwell or sukkah in the body of a man, and that eventually YHVH will dwell or sukkah with his people forever in the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:3).

The Water Libation Ceremony (*Simchat Hasho-ehvah*) and Hoshana Rabbah

During Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles), the intense anticipation of rain came to be reflected in the Temple Services. "Many of the observances and prayers of Succo[t] are associated with water and rain—including the water drawing, the prayer for rain, and the Four Species, which are agricultural products that require plentiful water. The reason for this is that, as the *Mishnah* (*Rosh Hashanah* 1:2) states: 'On the Succo[t] festival they [i.e., the world] is judged for water' (see *Rosh Hashana* 16a) [See *Zech. 14:17* where it is prophesied that during the Millennium YHVH will punish the nations who refuse to go up to Jerusalem to celebrate Sukkot with deprivation of rain.] Moreover, Succo[t] celebrates the harvest and comes shortly before the next planting season. Thus, it is a time to thank Elohim for His past kindness and to beseech His continued benevolence in the form of plentiful rain for crops" (*ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash*, p. 897).

Each morning of Sukkot, a water libation ceremony was offered to YHVH as a visual prayer for rain. The water was poured through pipes at the top of the southwest corner of the altar. The Water Drawing Ceremony, known as *Simchat Hasho-ehvah* or Celebration of the Place of Water-Drawing, was performed every evening, accompanied by an intense, night-long festivity, which was led by the most distinguished scholars and righteous men (*tzaddikim*) of Israel. The Talmud says that one who never witnessed the joy of the water drawing never saw a true celebration in his life (Ibid., pp. 896-897).

This ceremony was considered by the Rabbis as bearing a subordinate reference to the dispensation of the rain, the annual fall of which they imagined was determined by YHVH at that feast, its main and real application was to the future outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as predicted—probably in allusion to this very rite by Isaiah (Isa 12:3). Shortly after dawn each morning, while the many sacrifices were being prepared, the high priest was accompanied by a joyous procession of music and worshipers down to the Pool of Siloam. The high priest carried a golden pitcher capable of holding about a quart of water. He carefully dipped the pitcher into the pool and brought it back to the Temple Mount.

At the same time, another procession went down to a nearby location south of Jerusalem where willows of the brook grew in great abundance. There they gathered the long, thin willows and brought them back to the Temple. At the Temple, the willows were placed on the sides of the altar so that their tops formed a canopy of drooping branches over the altar.

Upon arriving at the Water Gate (the southern gate of the Temple complex) the High Priest carrying water and his procession would be met with three blasts of the silver trumpets and the words of Isaiah 12:3 would be proclaimed: "Therefore, with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation."

Once in the Temple, into a basin the High Priest would pour out the water libation while simultaneously pouring wine into another basin. Three blasts of the silver trumpet would follow the pouring which signalled the start of the Temple music. The people listened as a choir of Levites sang the Hallel (i.e., the praise Psalms, 113-118). The outpouring of the water and wine represents the outpouring of the Spirit, of Elohim, which occurs when YHVH's called out ones have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb (1 Pet 18-19). Scripture speaks of the blood and water in several places:

- ☞ But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water (John 19:34).
- ☞ For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people (Heb. 9:19).
- ☞ This is he that came by water and blood, even Yeshua the Messiah; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth (1 John. 5:6).
- ☞ And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one (1 John. 5:8).

At the proper time, the congregation waved their palm branches (*lulavim*) toward the altar and joined in singing: "Save us now, I pray, O YHVH; O YHVH, I pray, send now prosperity" (Ps 118:25). At the same time, the priests with the palm branches in hand, marched once (seven times on the Seventh Day of Sukkot or Hoshana Rabbah/ the Last Great Day of the Feast) around the altar.

Hoshana Rabbah, the seventh day of the Feast is, in itself, a festival of its own and is observed solemnly as an extension of the Day of Atonement. On this day, the rabbis tell us that the Gates of Judgment finally close and the decrees pronounced by YHVH on the Day of Atonement take effect. Hoshana Rabbah is viewed as the end of the cycle that started on the first day of the sixth month: the 30 days of self examination and repentance (in preparation for the return of Messiah), the Ten Days of Awe picture the judgment of the wicked and the final cleansing of the Saints before the Bridegroom's (Yeshua's) arrival. These ten days occur between Yom Teruah/Day of Shofar Blowing and Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement followed by Sukkot, which ends at Hoshana Rabbah.

On Hoshana Rabbah, the congregates march with lulav and etrog in hand seven times (instead of one, as before) around the *bimah* or altar. Three sets of seven blasts of the trumpets occur in place of the three blasts on the previous days. This is done in remembrance of how the walls fell at Jericho as Israel was about to enter the Promised Land – a foreshadow of the Eternal Kingdom of YHVH the preaching of which figured so prominently in the Gospel accounts of Yeshua's ministry. As the walls of Jericho fell, so it was anticipated that by YHVH's direct interposition, the walls of heathenism would fall before Messiah at His coming and that the land would lie open for His people to go in and possess it. Indeed, this will occur at Yeshua's Second Coming.

Hoshana Rabbah, also pictures the final stage of YHVH's plan of salvation, The Last Great Day or the Great White Throne Judgment to occur at the end of the 1000 year Millennium (Rev 20:11-15). It pictures the final day of judgment and the sealing of those who will receive eternal life as opposed to those who will suffer the second and final death.

Psalm 118 was viewed as a messianic psalm and as such gave the feast a messianic emphasis. This is why Yeshua's followers were waving palm branches on his triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Matt 21:8-9; Luke 19:38; John 12:13). They viewed Him as the Messiah King, come to deliver ("save now") Israel in fulfillment of Psalm 118 and they hailed Him with the messianic imagery of palm branches from the Feast of Tabernacles. This same imagery is in view in Revelation 7:9-10 where redeemed saints worship, with palm branches in hand, around the throne of the Father and the Lamb.

Against this backdrop of great excitement and anticipation of both temporal rain and the prophetic spiritual rain of the Messianic age, on Hoshana Rabbah, Yeshua the Messiah made His famous declarations recorded in John 7:37-9,

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Yeshua stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believes on me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spoke he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Set-apart Spirit was not yet given; because that Yeshua was not yet glorified.)

The Temple Menorah Lighting Ceremony

This ceremony was observed each evening of Sukkot. It was known as the *Simchat Bet Hasho'ayva* (or "The Rejoicing of the House of Water Drawing"). This ceremony occurred on the second evening of Sukkot (the evening of the first high Sabbath day). The Levites would gather in the inner court of the Temple (the Court of the Israelites) where four 75-foot tall Menorahs (each holding gallons of olive oil) with stairs ascending to them were lit by young boys amidst the sounds of musical instruments. The Psalms of the fifteen degrees (Ps 120-134) were sung. All night long, the Levites and elders performed impressive torch dances, while the steady yellow flames of the menorah oil lamps flooded the Temple and the streets of Jerusalem with brilliant light.

The celebration was repeated every night until the final night as a prelude to the water drawing ceremony in the morning. Nothing in ancient Israel compared to this light celebration. It was so spectacular that the ancient rabbis said: "he that has not beheld the joy of drawing water (of which the Menorah Lighting Ceremony prepared the hearts and expectations of the people for the next morning) never saw a true celebration in his life.

The light celebration was reminiscent of the descent of the Shekinah glory in Solomon's day and looked forward to the return of the Shekinah in the days of the Messiah (Ezek 43:1-6) as well as the time when the light of truth would shine upon the Gentile world as prophesied in Isaiah 9:2, "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them has the light shined" and 60:1-3, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of YHVH is risen upon you. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but YHVH shall arise upon you, and his glory shall be seen upon you. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."

John recorded that it was the day after Sukkot (on the eighth day), a Sabbath, when Yeshua proclaimed: "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (John 8:12, 9:14).

The Four Species and the Lulav Waving Ceremony

Concerning this ceremonial aspect of Sukkot, Scripture commands,

Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the YHVH seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath. 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 the YHVH your Elohim seven days. (Lev 23:39)

The Hebrew word *lulavim* means "palm branches" and is a general reference to all four species, of which the palm frond is the largest. The command to wave the *lulavim* comes from this verse in Torah. Not only was the Sukkah itself to be made of these materials, but it became the tradition to actually wave them in joyous celebration at specific times during the week-long Sukkot celebration. Every worshiper carried the *etrog* (citron) in his left hand and in the right hand the *lulavim* (or palm, with myrtle, and willow branches). It was customary to hold the *etrog* upside down (stem down) and then after a blessing is spoken, turn it right side and join it to the other three species in the other hand. This tradition is supposed to signify that separated and alone and without YHVH we are spiritually upside down and as spiritual Gentiles we were estranged from the commonwealth and covenants of Israel, until regathered and reunited with our lost Israelite brethren through Yeshua the Messiah (Eph 2:11-19).

The Jewish people waved palm branches at Yeshua's triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Matt 21:8-9; Luke 19:38; John 12:13). They viewed Him as the Messiah King, come to deliver ("save now") Israel in fulfillment of Psalm 118 and they hailed Him with the messianic imagery of palm branches from the Feast of Tabernacles. Again, we see the prophetic fulfillment of this in Revelation 7:9-10 where the redeemed saints worship, with palm branches in

hand, before the throne of the Father and the Lamb.

There can be no doubt that the four species were intended to remind Israel of the different stages of their wilderness journey, as represented by the different types of vegetation they would encounter along their journey. The palm branches recall the valleys and plains, the “boughs of thick trees,” the bushes on the mountain heights, and the willows from the brooks from which YHVH had given his people to drink, while the etrog was to remind them of the fruits of the good land which YHVH had given them.

Indeed, as spiritual pilgrims and sojourners passing through the wilderness of life who, as Yeshua said, are in the world, but not of the world, we encounter good times and bad, hills and valleys, fruitful plains and barren hillsides. Notwithstanding, we must never take our eyes off of the hope that YHVH has set before us—that of the Promised Land and the glorious kingdom of YHVH that awaits those who have faith and are faithful. These are they who overcome and pass through the trials and obstacles the wilderness of this life has to offer.

The lulav was used in the Temple on all of the seven festive days and even children, if they were able to shake it, were expected to carry one.

On the Seventh Day of the Feast, the Lulavim (and/or willow branches) were beat against the altar so that all the leaves would fall off. This was called the “Day of Beating the Branches.”

Prophetic Aspects of Sukkot and the Eighth Day: The Kingdom of Heaven & the Millennium— Are They the Same Event? When & Where Do They Occur?

The Millennium in the Context of YHVH's Seven Annual Feasts

YHVH's set-apart feast days are prophetic shadow-pictures or symbols of the steps man must take to be reconciled to his Heavenly Father. They are the complete plan of salvation or redemption rolled up into seven easy-to-understand steps. Though a child can understand these steps, the truths contained therein can at the same time be expanded and unfolded until one literally has rolled out before oneself the entire message of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation—a message which to the human comprehension is staggering, deep and rich beyond understanding.

These feast days are literally the skeletal structure upon which the truths of the entire Bible hang. The message of redemption, sanctification, salvation, the atonement, glorification, eschatology, the history of Israel, the entire Gospel message, the covenants, the marriage of the Lamb, the Bride of Messiah and Yeshua the Messiah are all prefigured within the glorious spiritual container of YHVH's set-apart feast days contained in seven steps—seven being the biblical number of divine perfection and completion.

The Feasts Represent the Seven Steps of YHVH's Plan of Redemption/ Salvation For Mankind (A Quick Overview)

1. **Passover (Pesach):** The first annual festival in YHVH's glorious lineup in the steps of redemption is Pesach which occurs in the early spring of the year at the time of the rebirth of the creation after a long and dead winter season. Likewise, it was the time of the birth of the nation of Israel. The Children of Israel had been enslaved in Egypt for many years, but they could not extricate themselves from the death grip of Pharaoh, a picture of Satan, without some help from above. YHVH heard their cries of anguish, told them to sacrifice a lamb and smear the blood on the doors of their homes. This they did by faith. YHVH extended his grace and mercy upon them, caused the angel of YHVH to pass over their homes so that they were delivered from the wages of their sins which is death. At the same time, the Egyptians received judgment unto death because they were not under the blood of the lamb. Israel was now free to leave Egypt. Spiritually one must leave the world (spiritual Egypt), a place of spiritual oppression and slavery, darkness and false religion. It is the realm or kingdom of Satan, the prince of death. One cannot leave the kingdom of darkness on one's own strength. One cannot free oneself from slavery to the strong tyrants and masters of this world, the flesh or the devil. A greater power than these must deliver us from these slave masters who maintain humans in their death grip. Only by the blood of the Lamb of YHVH smeared on the door posts and lintels (our actions and thoughts) of our houses (our lives) will the death angel pass over us, for Yeshua the Lamb of YHVH defeated the enemy at the cross and defeated the death sentence or death grip of sin by resurrecting from the grave on the

third day after his death (Col 2:12-15). The Israelites, by faith, trusted in the blood of the Lamb and by YHVH's grace their sins were not credited to their account, but were forgiven causing the death angel to pass over. At that time they physically began to leave Egypt.

2. **The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Hag HaMatzot):** The Israelites left Egypt on the first day of this seven-day long festival. Leaving Egypt was a relatively simple process, but now began the process of "getting Egypt out of them." Dying to self and overcoming all the sinful habits in our lives is a process. We cannot do this of our own efforts but need the redeeming work of Messiah. This is illustrated during this feast by YHVH's command to remove all the physical leavening from our homes. Leavening is a type of sin and pride since yeast causes bread to rise and puff up. The sin of pride and hypocrisy leads one to believe that one is in a better spiritual state than one actually is. This is the state of spiritual delusion in which humans naturally find themselves. YHVH has given men six days (6000 years) to come to realize this. The seventh day of this week-long festival is a high Sabbath day which pictures YHVH's Messianic Age (Millennium) when humans will be living in harmony with YHVH and resting in the saving work of blood of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. It represents victory over sin (leavening). Israel celebrated the Passover in the promised land then marched around Jericho for six days. On the seventh day, the walls of Jericho came down!
3. **The Feast of Weeks, Feast of First Fruits or Pentecost (Shavuot):** This is the third of the seven festivals of YHVH and occurs in the late spring of the year. Humans are not able to remove sin from their own lives by their own efforts anymore than one can pull oneself up by one's own bootstraps. Sin is too much a part of our mind, will and emotions. We need the working and enabling power of the Spirit of Elohim (*Ruach HaKodesh*) in our lives to bring sin to light and to help us to overcome it. This happens as we begin to feed upon the Word of YHVH/Yeshua the Messiah and little-by-little our lives come into conformity with that Word or with the life of Yeshua—the Word of YHVH made flesh (John 1:14; Rom. 8:29). This is pictured by the Children of Israel receiving the words and instructions on how to live a holy and sanctified life (contained in the Torah-law) of YHVH Elohim at Mount Sinai during the Feast of Weeks. This was repeated during the Apostolic Era on the Day of Pentecost as Yeshua promised to send the Comforter to live inside of Believers aiding them at arriving at the truth of YHVH (John 14-16). This promise was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2).
4. **The Day of Shofar Blowing/or the Awakening Bast (Yom Teruah or commonly called Rosh Hoshana):** This is the fourth annual festival of YHVH Elohim and hence the fourth step in his plan of salvation. Yom Teruah occurs in the late summer or early fall season of the year. The spring feasts all relate to the work Yeshua accomplished on the earth at his first coming while the fall feasts (of which Yom Teruah is the first) picture the work he will do on earth prior to and after his second coming. This day pictures the beginning of the Great Tribulation period just prior to the return of Yeshua the Messiah. This festival also pictures the time when Messiah is calling his bride, born-again Believers, to ready themselves spiritually for the return of Yeshua, the Bridegroom. The call will go out for her to come out of the world, to fill her lamp with the oil of the Spirit of Elohim and to put on robes of righteousness in preparation for the marriage supper of the Lamb. During the ten-day period between this high Sabbath day, and the one (Yom Kippur) is when the great tribulation occurs and when many will be saved out of this tribulation (the great and innumerable multitude—Rev. 7:9). After the tribulation period, which terminates with the blowing of the seventh trumpet (in Hebraic thought called "the last trumpet") the resurrection of the righteous dead and the catching away of the righteous living occurs (Rev 11:14-18 and 12:10 with Matt 24:29-31). This occurs before the wrath of Elohim (the bowl judgments of Rev 15-16).
5. **The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur):** This fifth of the seven festivals of YHVH occurs ten days after the Day of Trumpets. This day pictures when the end of the age (man's 6000 years upon earth to live in sin and rebellion against YHVH) will come to a completion. This period of grace will terminate. All who are saved will have been saved and removed from this earth as YHVH pours out his final judgment (called the wrath of Elohim and which is different than the great tribulation, which occurred just prior to this) upon the wicked and godless rebels left upon the earth. This period will culminate with the battle of Armageddon at which time Yeshua the Messiah will return to earth as the Conquering

King to defeat his enemies, marry his bride—the righteous Saints—and rule the earth with a rod of iron for 1000 years. At this time, Satan will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit.

6. **The Feast of Tabernacles/Booths (Sukkot or Succot):** This festival represents the time period when the harvest of souls is completed (therefore, it is a harvest festival occurring at the beginning of the fall season when the agricultural harvest of the fruit of the earth is completed, as well) and a great feast occurs called the marriage supper of the Lamb. King Yeshua will have put down his enemies (the Beast, the False Prophet, the Antichrist, Satan and all else who opposed YHVH Elohim). This festival is a time of great rejoicing and merriment and is often referred to simply as “the feast.” YHVH commanded his people to celebrate it for seven days. It is a picture of the 1000 year reign of King Yeshua on earth (called the Messianic Age or Millennium) from his headquarters in Jerusalem. This will be literally a time of paradise on earth.
7. **The Eighth Day (Shemini Atzeret):** This is the seventh and final feast of YHVH and occurs the very next day after the last day of Sukkot. Eight is the biblical number of new beginnings and this day pictures what occurs after the Messianic Age and after man’s 7000 years on this earth. It is at this time that eternity in YHVH’s kingdom occurs. This is the time of the New Heaven and the New Earth; the time when New Jerusalem comes down from heaven. We find this time period described in Revelation 21 and 22. Scripture does not give many details about eternity, but just enough to whet our appetites and inspire our hopes to press onward to be overcomers with Yeshua so that we will be participants in his glorious and everlasting kingdom. The New Jerusalem will be the home and glorious wedding garment of the Saints of YHVH, the bride of Yeshua. It is here that Yeshua and his bride will live spiritually as one for all eternity.

What Scripture Says About the Messianic Era or Millennium

- ☞ The Millennium or Messianic Era is a literal 1000 year period (Rev 20:2-7).
- ☞ Regathering of Israel into their land inheritance in fulfillment of YHVH’s promises to Abraham is to occur (Jer 32:36-38; Isa 14:1- 2; 60: 4,9).
- ☞ Ancient Israel entering the Promised Land is a type of Believers entering into the Millennium (Heb 3-4).
- ☞ During the Millennium:
 - Elohim will live with his people (Ezek 37:26-28).
 - David will rule as King over Israel (Ezek 37:24-25).
 - YHVH’s annual feast will be kept by all people (Ezek 46:3- 6; cf Col 2:16-17).
 - YHVH’s government will be established on Mount Zion in Jerusalem: Torah will go forth from Mount Zion and the nations will go up to Mount Zion to worship YHVH in the house (temple) of YHVH (Mic 4:1-2).
 - A highway of YHVH, or a highway of holiness will lead to Zion (Isa 35:8-10).
 - Whether literal or spiritual, living waters will flow from Jerusalem and Yeshua’s throne. Water was flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (Ezek 47:1; Zech 14:8).
 - On the bank of the river there were very many trees on each side (Ezek 47:6-9).
 - People will live to a very old age (Isa 65:20).
 - Crowds of people will flock to Jerusalem (Zech 2:1-4; Isa 49:14).
 - The temple in Jerusalem will be rebuilt (Zech 6:15; 14:20-21; Hag 2:6- 9).
 - The Messiah will be king over the whole world (Zech 6:9-13; Isa 11:1- 5; Rev 20:6; 5:9-10).
 - The nations which do not want to serve and obey YHVH will be destroyed (Isa 9:5-7; 60:12; Zech 14:16-19).

The Millennium is the fulfillment of all prophecies/promises for the people of Israel (including the “church”). Many Christians see the Millennium as the place where the righteous Israelites (i.e. Jews) will reign with Messiah while the Believers are reigning spiritually in heaven. In other words, the Jews have a physical inheritance/kingdom on this earth, while the Believers (the Christians) have a spiritual inheritance and kingdom in heaven. For those who believe this way the Millennium is a symbolic metaphor for heaven.

For those who believe that the Millennium is merely a symbolic metaphor, the 70 or so Scriptures in the Tanakh dealing with the Messianic Age are assigned to the “church.” To interpret Scripture in this manner is a form of spiritualization of the *peshat* or plain meaning of these prophecies and a form of replacement theology. Much of this confusion stems from not knowing who Israel is as opposed to the Jews (descended primarily from the tribe of Judah, which is only one of the twelve tribes of Israel).

In this work, we take the position that Yeshua meant what he said when stating that the meek would inherit the earth (Matt 5:5) as opposed to heaven. For us, this means that YHVH’s people, the Saints, made up of both the Jews and those of the nations who combine in Yeshua to become the one new man and nation of Israel (Eph 2:11–19). These same people who have been grafted into the spiritual olive tree of Israel (Rom 11:17ff), and as such are now Israelites and are the seed of Abraham (Rom 4:16; 9:8–11; Gal 3:7,8,14,28–29), will rule with Yeshua as kings and priests in his kingdom on earth for a thousand years (Rev 1:6; 5:10).

Jewish Rabbinic Thought Regarding the Messianic Age/Millennium

The Jewish rabbis have been studying the prophecies in the Tanakh (Old Testament) for thousands of years. Though they reject Messiah Yeshua, they nonetheless have great wisdom and insight based on their understanding of the Bible into subjects such as the Millennium or Messianic Era or Age, as they call it.

In Jewish thought, the Age of Messiah (different than the Messianic Era or Age) is considered to be the last one-third (or two thousand years) of the six thousand year time period man will be on this earth (represented by the six days of the work week) prior to the coming of the Messiah at the end of six thousand years. Messiah who will usher in and rule over the final one thousand year (represented by the seventh day or Sabbath rest at the end of our present weekly cycle) Messianic Age (or Millennium, in the Christian thought), which will be a time peace and paradise on earth (*Soncino Talmud—Avodah Zarah 9a; Sanhedrin 97a,b*).

Here are various thoughts from Jewish rabbinical sources about this one thousand year period to occur at the end of the age:

- ✎ The one-thousand year period of messianic rule, sometimes referred to as the “days of the Messiah,” which is to precede the Last Judgment and the world to come (*haolam haba*)” (*The Encyclopedia of the Jewish Religion*, Massada Press, 1965, p. 263).
- ✎ Originally the meaning of the word *olam* was temporal (age) rather than spatial (world), and the terms under discussion (*olam ha-zeh* and *olam ha-ba*) signified respectively the present age, with all its shortcomings and miseries, and the future or messianic age (often identified with the Kingdom of Elohim). It was believed that some major catastrophic event (e.g. the Day of Judgment, the resurrection) would terminate the *olam hazeh* and usher in the *olam haba*. The concept of *olam haba* is thus different from that of Heaven or Paradise, which is the abode of departed souls pending the advent of the ‘coming age’” (Ibid., p. 289).
- ✎ In Jewish thought, the seven-day week is a prophetic picture of a seven thousand year plan of redemption culminating in the Messianic Age (or Era) during which time the final redemption occurs. The first 6000 years, according to Jewish thought, is subdivided into three periods: the first two days or two thousand years are called the “Age of Desolation,” days three through four are called the “Age of Torah” and the last two days (days five and six) are called the “Age of Messiah” (See *ArtScroll Beresheis 1(a)*, pp. 359) culminating in the final redemption when the Israelite exiles will return to the land of Israel and Messiah Son of David will assume rulership over the earth and the Messianic Age will be established upon this earth for 1000 years.
- ✎ It is believed that this final redemption will occur on the first day of the seventh month on the seventh day of the week at the beginning of the seventh millennium (*Messiah Vol. 2*, by Avi Ben Mordechai, p. 88).
- ✎ The future King Messiah (Messiah Son David) will not only redeem the Jews from exile, but will restore the observance of the Torah-commandments to its complete state, which will only be possible when the Israelites are living in the Land of Israel. At this same time, “there will be an ingathering of the dispersed remnant of Israel. This will make it possible for the Davidic dynasty to be reinstated and for the observance of the Torah and its *mitsvot* to be restored in its totality” (*I Await His Coming Every*

Day, p. 35, [see also p. 38 quoting Rambam] by Rabbi Menachem Schneerson). According to the Rambam in his Thirteen Principles of the Jewish Faith, the resurrection of the dead will occur just after the coming of the Messiah and that the resurrection of the dead is a key element of the final redemption (Ibid., p. 59).

- ☞ The Jewish rabbis recognize that the ingathering of the exiles, including the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, will also return and that the whole house of Israel will serve YHVH (Ezek. 20:32-37, 40-42) (*Mashiach – the Principles of Mashiach and the Messianic Era In Jewish Law and Tradition*, pp. 20-22, by Jacob Immanuel Schochet quoting from *Sanhedrin* 110b; *Bamidbar Rabba* 16:25; etc.)
- ☞ Of the kingdom of heaven, *The Encyclopedia of the Jewish Religion* states: “An eschatological concept, referring to a future state of perfection of the world, free from the stain of sin and suffering, and in which all shall live according to the precepts of the Divine Will. The Israelite prophets not only regarded history as the scene of Divine action rather than as a fortuitous series of events, but also envisaged a glorious consummation. The present sinful and imperfect order would come to an end on the terrible Day of the YHVH, but following this judgment Elohim would create a ‘new heaven and a new earth’ and all creatures would be at peace with one another, with nature and with Elohim, just as they were in the Garden of Eden. Originally the concept of the Kingdom of Heaven was not identical with the messianic idea. However the two eschatological concepts fused to some extent, until practically no distinction was made between the Kingdom of Heaven and the Days (or Realm) of the Messiah’ ... [T]he Kingdom of Elohim as it was called occupied a central position in the teachings of Yeshua, whose idea of the Kingdom of Heaven seems to have been closely related seems to contemporaneous sectarian views.... In Talmudic literature, the concept of the Kingdom of Heaven is at times vague and ambiguous. In many instances, it is equated with the ‘Days of Messiah’, but at other times it means *olam haba* as distinct from the messianic era. According to latter interpretation, the Kingdom of Heaven would succeed the messianic era; the reign of the Messiah, preceded by the messianic ‘birth pangs’ and the eschatological war, still belonged to this world. After the messianic era had come to an end, there would be a general resurrection of the dead, followed by the great judgment of all mankind and the establishment of the new creation cleansed of all unrighteousness, i.e., the Kingdom of Heaven” (p. 229).
- ☞ Quotes from *Mashiach*, pp. 23-33, by Jacob Emmanuel Schochet on the Messianic Era:
 - The Messianic Era will mark the end of evil and sin (Ezek 37:23; Zeph 3:13; Zech 13:2; Mal 3:19; Isa 60:21; Jer 50:20).
 - The Messianic Era will be a time of universal awareness, perception and knowledge of YHVH (Isa 11:9; 40:5; 52:8; Jer 31:32-33).
 - Universal worship of Elohim. The Messiah will mend the whole world so that all shall serve YHVH in unity (Zeph 3:9; Isa 2:2-3; Mic 4:1-2; Zech 9:16; 14:9).
 - Universal peace and harmony (Isa 2:4; Mal 4:3; Hos 2:18; Zech 9:10); This new attitude will also be reflected in the animal world (Isa 11:6-9; 65:25).
 - A time of the resurrection of the dead (Isa 26:19; Ezek 37:12-14; Dan 12:2).
 - A time of blissful utopia; end of disease and death. All will be healed (Isa 35:5-6; 25:8).
 - It will be a time of ease. Our physical needs will be taken care of by others, as stated in Isaiah 61:5.
 - The earth will manifest extraordinary fertility, yielding an overabundance of every kind of produce and trees growing ripe fruits every day. Zion’s wilderness will be made to be like Eden and her desert like the garden of Elohim (Isa 51:3; Ezek 36:29-30; Amos 9:13).

The Final Redemption Is to Occur at the Beginning of and During the Messianic Age or Millennium

The concept of the Messianic Age in Hebraic thought encompasses the concept of the first and final redemptions, which are two separate events. The first redemption occurred when the Israelites left Egypt or spiritually when the Believer leaves spiritual Egypt at the time of their salvation. By contrast, the final redemption occurred when the

Israelites entered the Promised Land, which spiritually and prophetically corresponds to the Believer being resurrected at the end of the age and receiving their spiritual inheritance, i.e. glorified bodies and rulership with Messiah in the Messianic Age for 1000 years) (*Messiah Volume II*, pp. 186, 191-192).

The final redemption is a Jewish rabbinic concept that is sprinkled through out Jewish writings. It is an event (or series of events) that occurs at the end of the age prior to the return of Messiah (Yeshua) Ben (son of) David and at the beginning of the Messianic Age (Millennium). The Jewish sages teach, based on their understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures, that the following notable events are to occur in conjunction with the final redemption:

- There will be an ingathering of the dispersed remnant of Israelite exiles to the land of Israel including both the exiles of the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom and those of the Southern Kingdom of Israel.
- Messiah Son of David will assume rulership over the earth and the Messianic Age will be established upon this earth for 1000 years.
- The Davidic dynasty (Tabernacle of David) will be reinstated with the observance of the Torah and its commandments (*mitsvot*) to be restored in its totality.
- The resurrection of the dead will occur just at the coming of the Messiah.

Restoration of the Tabernacle of David to Occur During the Millennium as Part of the Final Redemption

The term “tabernacle of David” is referring to the “kingdom of David,” which during his reign consisted of his ruling over all twelve tribes of Israel, something he will again do in the Millennium (Ezek 37:24-25).

After the death of David’s son, Solomon, the united kingdom of Israel was divided between the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, and became known in Scripture as the House of Israel and the House of Judah respectively. They have yet to be reunited to this day, and there are numerous Scriptures in the Tanakh (OT) prophesying that a time is yet to come when they will become a united kingdom once again as before. The context of those prophecies (e.g. Ezek 37) is millennial, and this has been the opinion of the Jewish rabbis for thousands of years as we shall see below. Listed below are the several scriptures pertaining to the raising up of the tabernacle of David:

- And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the **tabernacle** (Heb. *obel*, Strong’s H168 meaning “tent, dwelling, covering, nomad’s tent symbolic of wilderness life”) **of David**, judging, and seeking judgment, and hastening righteousness. (Isa 16:5)
- In that day will I raise up the **tabernacle** (Heb. *sukkab*, Strong’s H5521 meaning “tabernacle, booth, pavilion”) **of David** that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old. (Amos 9:11)
- After this I will return, and will build again the **tabernacle** (*skene*, Strong’s G4633 meaning “tent, tabernacle made of green boughs”) **of David**, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up. (Acts 15:16)
- When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Master, wilt you at this time restore again the **kingdom** to Israel? (Acts 1:6)

Rabbinical Quotes Pertaining to the Restoration of the Exiled Ten Tribes of Israel to Their Inheritance In Israel

For nearly two thousand years the Jewish rabbinic teachers have been teaching that descendants of the so-called lost ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom of Israel whose ancestors were taken as captive slaves to Assyria in the eighth century B.C. would at some time in the future recover their Israelite identity and be restored to the land of Israel. This was not mere rabbinic fantastical speculation, but was based on the numerous prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures stating that not only would this occur, but it would happen prior to the coming of the Messiah Son of David (e.g., Ezek. 37:15–28), which is a prophecy concerning the second coming of Yeshua the Messiah at the end of the age. Here are a few rabbinic quotes over the past 1500 years discussing this very issue:

- ✎ The Babylonian *Talmud*, *Yevamot* 17a (c. 500 C.E., *Soncino Talmud*) states the following:
... (the ten tribes) (were declared) to be perfect gentiles (heathen); as it is said in the Scriptures, They have dealt treacherously against HaShem [YHVH], for they have

begotten strange children.” (Hoshea 5:7, referring to Judah and Ephraim).

- ✎ The *ArtScroll Tanach Series Bereishis* (an Orthodox Jewish commentary on Genesis) quotes, regarding Genesis 48:19, Orthodox Jewish sage of the Middle Age, Ibn Ezra wrote,

Many nations will descend from him [Ephraim]. That is, the word, *fullness, melo*, connotes *abundance, the* phrase meaning: and his seed will become the abundance of the nations (*Neter; Karnei Or*)” (p. 2121). According to Radak (Rabbi Dovid Kimchi of the Middle Ages), “This refers to the Exile when the lands of others will be filled with his scattered descendants.” See also Hoshea 7:8: Ephraim shall be mingled among the nations (Ibid.).

- ✎ A key element in the regathering of the exiled Israelites will be the coming Messiah Son of David who will not only redeem the Jews from exile, but will restore the observance of the Torah-commandments to its complete state, which will only be possible when the Israelites are living in the Land of Israel. At this same time, **“there will be an ingathering of the dispersed remnant of Israel.** This will make it possible for the Davidic dynasty to be reinstated and for the observance of the Torah and its *mitzvot* to be restored in its totality” (*I Await His Coming Every Day*, p. 35, [see also p. 38 quoting Rambam] by Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, emphasis added). According to the Rambam in his Thirteen Principles of the Jewish Faith, the resurrection of the dead will occur just after the coming of the Messiah and that the resurrection of the dead is a key element of the final redemption (Ibid., p. 59).

The Jewish rabbis recognize that **the ingathering of the exiles, including the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom, will also return and that the whole house of Israel will serve YHVH** (Eze. 20:32-37, 40-42) (*Mashiach—the Principles of Mashiach and the Messianic Era In Jewish Law and Tradition*, pp. 20-22, by Jacob Immanuel Schochet quoting from *Sanhedrin 110b; Bamidbar Rabba 16:25; etc.*).

- ✎ The *ArtScroll Bereishis Commentary*, vol. 1(b) states in its commentary on Genesis 48:19 regarding Ephraim,

R. Munk explains: ‘while it is true that the dispersion [of the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh] was caused by the unfaithfulness and sinfulness of Ephraim’s descendants (Hos. 7:8ff), Jacob’s blessing was not in vain for “they will return to Elohim” and will have their share in the world to come (*Sanhedrin 110b*).’ And R. Eliezer adds: ‘Even the darkness in which the Ten Tribes were lost will one day become as radiant as the day’ (according to the version of *Avos d’Rabbi Nosson 36*). And in the perspective of history, did no these exiled children of the Patriarchs enlighten the nations among whom they were scattered? They did so by teaching their conquerors the fundamental ideas of the knowledge and love of Elohim, ideals they had never forsaken. Hence they too have a messianic vocation and their Messiah the Maschiach ben Yosef, Messiah son of Joseph (*Succah 52a*), also called Messiah son of Ephraim (*Targum Yonasan* on Exodus 40:11), will play an essential role in humanity’s redemption, for he will be the precursor of the Maschiach ben David, Messiah Son of David. It is therefore not surprising to find that the prophet Jeremiah (3:12) speaks affectionately of Ephraim. In this light, Jacob’s words, *his offspring will fill the nations nation,*’ assume the significance of blessing (pp. 2121-2122).

- ✎ *The Stone Edition Chumash* state in regards to Deuteronomy 32:26 where YHVH says, “I said, I would scatter them into the corners ...” *ArtScroll Stone Edition Tanach Chumash* comments,

This refers to the exile of the Ten Tribes, who were scattered to an unknown place where they have never been heard from again. On the phrase of the same verse, “I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men...” the same *Chumash* states, “This is a reference to the exile of Judah and Benjamin, the Davidic kingdom from which today’s known Jews are descended.” It goes on to say that though nations would seek to destroy Israel entirely YHVH would never allow Israel to become extinct or disappear. Israel’s perpetual existence is constant reminder of YHVH’s plan and eventually Israel will thrive and fulfill YHVH’s intention for it” (pp. 1105-1106).

- ☞ Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch in his commentary on the Pentateuch on the same verse translates the phrase, “I would scatter them into the corners ...” as, “I would relegate them into a corner,” and then says that the Hebrew here refers to the “extreme end of a surface, the side or corner ...” He, too, relates this fate to the Ten Tribes who would be scattered “to some distant corner of the world, where, left entirely to themselves, they could mature towards serious reflection and ultimate return to Me...” (p. 650).

Shemini Atzeret, the Eighth Solemn Assembly or The Eighth Day

Eternity (Olam Haba) the Coming World, the Age to Come, To Occur After the Messianic Age or Millennium

As already noted above, Shemini Atzeret is a one day festival occurring directly after Sukkot (the Feast of Tabernacles) on the twenty-second day of the seventh month of the biblical calendar. It is a solemn assembly when YHVH expects his people to gather together for religious instruction. It is also a high Sabbath day when no work is allowed.

The Eighth Day is unique in that it is the seventh of YHVH's seven annual festivals, yet it falls on the eighth day after the beginning of Sukkot, hence, its name. In biblical numerics, seven is the number of perfection or completion, while eight is the number of new beginnings or eternity. Even our number eight (8) when turned on its side is the generic symbol for eternity. Therefore, the Eighth Day is a prophetic shadow picture of the period of time that marks the conclusion of the one-thousand year long Millennium and of man's seven thousand year tenure on this earth (of which the seven day week and the seven days of creation in Genesis one are a pattern).

YHVH has given mortal man six days of six thousand years to do his own work; to do things his way. Both the seventh day and the seventh millennia (i.e., the Millennium) are Sabbaths when man ceases from all his labors to commune with YHVH. During the millennial Sabbath, mortal man will have the opportunity to come to a saving knowledge of YHVH Elohim and is Son, the Redeemer and Savior, Yeshua the Messiah. Those who accept Yeshua will be spared from eternal damnation (the lake of fire)—judgment against their sin—and will receive eternal life and a place in YHVH's eternal kingdom. Shemini Atzeret is a prophetic picture of YHVH's eternal kingdom that lasts forever. Scripture teaches that only those who have accepted Yeshua as their Master and Savior, have died physically and have been resurrected with glorified spiritual bodies will inhabit this spiritual kingdom. We find this time period outlined in Revelation chapters 21 and 22 where Scripture gives us a description of the the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven to a new and recreated earth.

Here are some of the distinctive characteristics of the this period of time that, for lack of a better term, we shall call *eternity*. This is a distinct and separate age that occurs after the one thousand year long Millennium. In YHVH's seven annual feasts, Sukkot or the Feast of Tabernacles is a prophetic shadow-picture of the Millennium, while the Eighth Day or Shemini Atzeret represents the age occurring *after* the close of the Millennium and will last into *eternity*. Scripture gives us some characteristics of this age:

- ☞ The creation of the new heaven, new earth and the new Jerusalem is to occur at the end of the Millennium. (Rev 21:1–2)
- ☞ There will be no physical sun or moon there. YHVH–Yeshua himself will be that light. (Isa 60:19–20; Rev 21:23; 22:5)
- ☞ There will be no more tears or mourning. (Rev 21:4)
- ☞ A heavenly Jerusalem will descend to the recreated earth. (Rev 21:2)
- ☞ New Jerusalem is approximately 1,200 hundred miles square. (Rev 21:16)
- ☞ A river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of Elohim and of the Lamb. (Rev 22:1)
- ☞ On either side of the river was the tree of life. (Rev 22:2)
- ☞ There is no physical temple in Jerusalem. YHVH Elohim is the temple. (Rev 21:22)
- ☞ The streets are paved with translucent gold. (Rev 21:21)
- ☞ The city walls contain twelve gates named after the twelve tribes of Israel. (Please note, there is no Gentile gate!). (Rev 21:12)

It is ironic to note that considering the length of time that eternity is, Scripture has very little to say about it. Only enough details are given to cause the righteous to have a deep and longing hope for the day of its arrival.

As the world continues to groan under the weight of man's sin and depravity, and international leaders are unable to solve the world's problems, the appeal and attraction of the New Earth and the New Jerusalem becomes greater for Believers who realize that this, in reality, is man's only hope for the future.

A place is indeed reserved in the New Jerusalem for those Saints who keep the commandments of YHVH and have the faith of Yeshua (Rev 14:12), and who have not become spiritually defiled by false religious systems, but have stayed spiritually pure in a virginal state for Yeshua the Lamb of Elohim whom they follow wherever he goes (Rev 14:4-5).

None of us can really comprehend what the New Jerusalem will be like, but one thing is certain: if we are redeemed from our sins by the blood of the Yeshua the Lamb and remain faithful to follow him wherever he leads, we are assured of a place in his glorious and radiant eternal kingdom.

