

THE CHOSEN PEOPLE



Volume XXIII, Issue 7

SEPTEMBER 2017

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

JEWISH ESCATOLOGY
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FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dr. Mitch Glaser
President, Chosen People Ministries

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

Jesus, Himself
is the fulfillment—
He is God in the flesh
who tabernacled
among us.

Shalom,

It is hard to believe another year has passed! The Fall Feasts are upon us, and Jewish people all around the world will soon begin to celebrate the New Year (*Rosh Hashanah*), the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*), and the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*)—the three great Fall Festivals described in Leviticus 23:23-44.

We believe that each of the Festivals points to Jesus in one way or another, and this is wonderfully true of the Feast of Tabernacles! This Feast, in particular, carries a rich meaning for both Christians and Jewish people alike.

YESHUA THE MESSIAH AND THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

Jesus (*Yeshua* in Hebrew) is the fulfillment of all the Jewish Festivals, and this includes Sukkot. First of all, we understand that Jesus Himself is the fulfillment of the Festival in that He is God in the flesh who “tabernacled” among us. As John wrote,

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

The Greek word John used for “dwelt” is *skene*, a word that refers to the pitching of a tent. The image is easy to grasp—through the incarnation, God pitched a tent, which was His flesh, to veil His pure glory. Jesus pitched His tabernacle and dwelled among us for a short sojourn until the day He returns to reign as King. The incarnation was a foretaste of the experience of God’s glory we will enjoy when the kingdom is established on earth. In that day, the Messiah will be King over all, and both Israel and the nations will bow to Him as their sovereign Lord.

...so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:10-11)

In the 7th chapter of John, we see that Jesus Himself celebrated the Festival and, in fact, He used the celebration to make one of the most profound announcements regarding who He is. Specifically, it was on the seventh day of the Feast, called *Hoshana Rabbah*. This day is also known in Judaism as the last Day of Judgment. It was customary at that time for the Jewish people to send a choir of Levites and a priestly orchestra to the pool of Siloam to gather water in giant urns, which were then brought back to the altar.

They would march around the altar crying out *Hosheanah*—“Lord save us... Lord save us,” many times over. They would then pour the water from the urns at the base of the altar. This ceremony symbolized the future hope of the Jewish people—looking forward to the day when God would pour out His Spirit upon the people of Israel in fulfillment of Joel 2:28-29:

It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind: And your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

According to Jewish tradition, these events were expected to take place when the Messiah appeared on the earth. This “pouring out” was foreshadowed in the Temple by the pouring out of the water at the base of the altar. The *water drawing ceremony*, as it was known, was a portrait of the day when God would send His Messiah and His Spirit, and the Jewish people would become alive spiritually as they had never before.

Jesus understood the traditions associated with this great day of the Feast, and He knew this was the last opportunity on the Jewish calendar to repent of sins and be cleansed. It is a common misconception that Judaism teaches that the Books of Life and Death are sealed at the conclusion of the Day of Atonement; however, Jewish tradition dating back to the first century

tells us that the judgment, which determines one's fate for the year, is actually finalized on *Hoshana Rabbah*—literally, the great day of salvation.

It was at the high point of this ceremony when Jesus rose up and cried out:

"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:37-39)

Clearly, He was telling the crowds He was the Messiah, and that the Spirit of God is now being poured out, and that He is the living water. Those who drink, or believe in Him, will never thirst again! The Jewish people had a chance to find forgiveness of sin at the conclusion of the High Holiday cycle, and that moment had arrived—the way of salvation was through faith in Him!

It is safe to assume that Jesus' declaration was heard by many Jewish people that day, because Sukkot is one of the three biblical Festivals which required all Jewish males to travel to Jerusalem from around the world.

THE FUTURE SUKKOT

We will also see the Feast of Tabernacles fulfilled in the Kingdom period when the nations will be commanded to come up to Jerusalem and celebrate the Feast (Zechariah 14:16-19). If not, the prophet tells us that a drought would come upon those who disobey. We may assume that this is speaking of God literally withholding water, but also refers to a spiritual drought as those who do not follow the Lord also do not enjoy His favor and goodness.

There is a final unfolding of this great Festival which is described by the Apostle John who writes,

And I heard a loud voice from the thrones saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among men and they shall be His people and God Himself shall be among them, and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, crying, or pain, the first things have passed away. (Revelation 21:3-4)

We believe God will fulfill the kingdom promises to the Jewish people and establish the throne of Jesus in a literal and renewed Jerusalem. But that is not the end of the story—there is more to come. Ultimately, the whole earth will become the Sukkah booth of God, and He will reign for all eternity. As Paul describes,

When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all. (1 Corinthians 15:28)

This is a description of heaven, as after Jesus reigns as King over Israel and the nations for what many believe is for a literal thousand years (Revelation 20:1-5), the events described in Revelation 21 and 1 Corinthians 15 will take place. First, He literally fulfills His promises to Israel based upon the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:1-3), and then the eternal reign of the Triune God is established forever.

I hope this gives you a whole new perspective on why the Feast of Tabernacles is also called the "Season of Our Joy." What can bring greater joy than remembering how God tabernacled among us, while also looking forward to the day when He will be with us forever?

THE GOSPEL AND THE MIDDLE EAST CONFERENCE

There is much to learn about the present and future of Israel and the nations! This is why we have planned a major conference on biblical prophecy to study these very issues in the Scriptures! It is critical for us to look at current events through the lens of the Bible.

Speaking of which, I have some good news: we still have some room for you to join us at **The Gospel and the Middle East** conference scheduled for *October 13-14 in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex!* This is going to be an exciting opportunity to hear speakers like Joel Rosenberg, Darrell Bock, Craig Blaising, and others from the Chosen People Ministries staff. We are also bringing in speakers from Israel, and we will hear

testimonies from former Muslims who know the Lord and love the Jewish people.

The conference will be an incredible time of exploring what the Bible teaches about Israel and the Middle East, but it will also be a time of celebration as you hear directly from those who minister in Israel about how God is moving in the Holy Land! We are grateful for our co-sponsors, Dallas Theological Seminary and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, so please join us if you are able! The registration information is on the enclosed card, or you can register online at thegospelandthemiddleeast.com.

Thanks for your prayers and faithful financial support as we share the Good News of Jesus the Messiah with Jewish people around the globe!

Enjoy the remainder of the newsletter, especially the information about Jewish views of the end times. I pray you have a blessed High Holiday season. Please remember to pray for Your Mission to the Jewish People and for the many outreaches we are having at this time all around the globe.

In Him,


Mitch



Jewish Eschatology

THE FUTURE GOD HAS PLANNED FOR THE WORLD IS UNSTOPPABLE!

Jesus spoke about the future quite often, as it was one of His favorite subjects. After all He is the greatest of all the prophets (Deuteronomy 18:15ff).

In Matthew 24:32-33, Jesus said,

Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door.

Knowing more about our biblical future and the coming kingdom is one of our duties as disciples of Jesus the Messiah. We are not only part of God's world today, but we also have starring roles in His forever story! To the best of our ability, we must discover what He has planned and allow the future to inform the way we live and serve in the present. The Savior calls His disciples to live today in light of tomorrow. The future according to the Bible has also been important to the Jewish people since the sacred text was penned by Moses and the prophets thousands of years ago.

Central to a Jewish understanding of the future is the idea that this world is not currently what it is supposed to be. Swords and spears characterize relationships between nations today, but one day the Bible tells us that war will grind to a halt (Isaiah 2:4)! Our experiences of personal loss, weakness, and the impact of sin on society will come to an end, blessed be His name.

people back to the Holy Land. At that time, the Jewish people will live in perfect peace with their neighbors. We can easily argue that this return to the Land has begun. Yet, things are still not what they will be as the Jewish people are not yet living in the Land in peace. But, this day will come!

MODERN JEWISH VIEWS

Understanding modern Jewish views on the future is difficult as there is little consensus on the topic. More liberal forms of Judaism downplay the specific events the Bible describes as taking place in the last days, and focuses on repairing or healing the world (*tikkun olam*) today. On the other hand, the future according to classical Judaism, practiced within Orthodox communities, will be more familiar to students of God's Word.

Classical Judaism understands that the last days will bring about the great reversal of Jewish exile and reestablishment of the Davidic kingdom under the reign of the Messiah. Instead of living under the curses of exile, Israel will live in the light of the blessings promised in the Bible (Deuteronomy 28:1-14, 30:1-10). Antisemitism will be a thing of the past (Micah 4:4, Zechariah 8:23), and Jerusalem will be restored to its rightful place in the plan of God (Isaiah 60). All of Israel's enemies will be destroyed through an end-times series of wars, which God will fight on behalf of His chosen people (Zechariah 12, Ezekiel 38-39). Righteous Jewish people from all eras of history will rise from their graves in a miraculous resurrection (Daniel 12:2) to live in peace and harmony for eternity.

Of course, as believers in Jesus, and those who accept the authority of both the Old and New Testaments, we understand the glorious future God has prepared for the Jewish people will only come about when the Jewish people turn to the Messiah Jesus. As Paul writes,

For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery — so that you will not be wise in your own estimation — that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved....(Romans 11:25-26)

It is important to remember that Jewish people do not traditionally believe in two comings of the Messiah, although there is a teaching within Judaism about a future suffering Messiah and another Messiah who comes to reign as King. However, Judaism does connect the coming of the Messiah and the future kingdom with the Feasts of Israel. Some Jewish traditions expected that the Messiah would arrive on the eve of Passover, leading the Jewish people out of exile just as Moses led the people out of Egypt. Interestingly, we see



SOMETIMES SUKKOT BRINGS OUT THE CREATIVITY OF THE TRADITIONAL JEWISH COMMUNITY!

On a national scale, the people of Israel have spent more years in exile than they have in their homeland, which is surely the reverse of what God promised to Abraham (Genesis 15). The exile has brought national humiliation and diaspora, but one day, this will be reversed when God brings His



the fulfillment of this in the coming of *the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world* (John 1:29).

Other Jewish traditions link the sounding of a great trumpet (*shofar*—rams horn) from heaven, associated with Rosh Hashanah (the Feast of the New Year), announcing the coming of King Messiah, who will reign as the true King of Israel.

The Apostle Paul may very well reflect this expectation when he writes,

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. (1 Thessalonians 4:16)

However, the festival most associated with the future Messianic redemption of Israel and the nations, according to the Bible and Jewish tradition, is the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot). Zechariah prophesies that all the nations of the earth will come to Jerusalem to worship the Lord during the Feast of Tabernacles (Zechariah 14:16-19), celebrating the presence of God finally dwelling with humanity.

The temporary booths Jewish people build during the holiday remind us of our human frailty and point us to the day when God will establish His permanent presence on earth during the Messianic Age.

The festivals are a roadmap to redemption and direct our minds and hearts to what is to come. As sure as Jesus came once, He will come again! As Jewish and Gentile believers in Yeshua, there is much in the traditional Jewish understanding of the Last Days that we can affirm with eager expectation.

CHABAD LUBAVITCH MOVEMENT

Who Is the Messiah?

Chabad is a term which is an acronym created by using the first letters of the Hebrew words for wisdom, understanding, and knowledge. This is a Jewish religious movement that started in the late 1700s and was part of the larger Hasidic community present in Eastern Europe at that time. Hasidic Judaism is marked by mystical practices, strong community life, and both dynastic and charismatic leadership. The group is also sometimes called the Lubavitch Hasidim as Lubavitch was the town in Poland where the movement was based for almost a century. Hasidism in general (and there are many versions of this overall movement), reacted to what the members felt was the cold rationalism of Orthodoxy and the growing liberalism of the Jewish enlightenment (*Haskalah*).

The Hasidic movement cultivates a more joyful expression of the Jewish faith, which is very attractive to many. They also believe that one could communicate directly with God through mystical prayer.

During the rise of Hasidism, Jewish people were disappointed about many Jewish leaders making false Messianic claims. However, they still hoped for their Messiah to come. The Hasidic movement channeled this Messianic longing and encouraged their followers to keep the commandments diligently, which would somehow bring the coming of the Messiah, sooner rather than later. Chabad teaches that when every Jewish person is following Torah, the Messiah will come.

In the 20th century, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the seventh and last *Rebbe* encouraged unity among Jews and considered it his mission to bring every Jew back to Torah-observance so that the Messiah would return. However, Rebbe Schneerson was actually thought to be the Messiah by many of his followers. He passed away in 1994 without appointing a successor.

Many of his followers still believe he is the Messiah and will actually rise from the dead. There are posters in Brooklyn and parts of Israel announcing that King Messiah has come with pictures of the Rebbe Schneerson. Yet, it is impossible for the Rebbe to be considered the Messiah, because he does not meet the biblical qualifications.

Among them are:

1. The Messiah must be from the line of David. (Isaiah 9:7, Isaiah 11:1, Psalm 132:11, Genesis 49:10)
Rebbe Schneerson was not.
2. The Messiah must be born in Bethlehem. (Micah 5:2)
Rebbe Schneerson was not.
3. The Messiah must live a sinless life, die for the sins of His people, and rise from the dead (Isaiah 53).
Rebbe Schneerson did not.

Rebbe Schneerson was a great Jewish leader in many ways, but he was certainly not the Messiah. These prophecies and many others have been and will be fulfilled in Yeshua — Jesus, the one true Messiah of Israel!

Hebrews 8:8-12

A Superior Ministry and A Superior Covenant



Dr. Rich Freeman, D. Min. serves as the Vice President for Church Ministries and Conferences with Chosen People Ministries and lives in South Florida with his wife, Julia. Dr. Freeman works with churches throughout the country and abroad, helping to equip God's people to share the Gospel with their Jewish neighbors, friends and co-workers and grow in their understanding of the Scriptures.

Our last study focused on the superiority of the priesthood of the Messiah versus the Levitical priesthood. This study will focus on the superiority of His priestly ministry and ultimately the superiority of the New Covenant. The eighth chapter of Hebrews begins with a transitional statement, "Now the main point in what has been said is this..." Yeshua, Jesus our Messiah, is ministering in heaven, in the "true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man." He is ministering "at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." He is a minister in the most holy place of all, the heavenly tabernacle. The earthly tabernacle seen in the Old Testament, for which Moses was given the instructions to build, is simply a copy of the heavenly one. The Levitical priests performed their priestly service in the copy; Yeshua the Messiah does His priestly service in the true heavenly tabernacle

In verses 3-6, the writer of Hebrews expands on the reality that Yeshua is ministering in the heavenly tabernacle on our behalf right now. Why would he need to make this emphasis to the readers? For one, there was still a real physical temple standing in Jerusalem where priests were offering gifts and sacrifices. And if Yeshua is also a priest, He must be doing the same thing, right? Not exactly. What Yeshua is doing in the heavenly tabernacle is vastly different than the duties of earthly priests. While the earthly, Levitical priests were offering sacrifices on the altar over and over again, Yeshua offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice once and for all on that horrific Roman cross. He is now seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven, signifying His work has been completed. Our Lord is "a living sacrifice" in heaven. He is not offering Himself over and over because that would be totally unnecessary. Furthermore, Yeshua could have never been an earthly priest under

the Mosaic law because those priests had to be from the tribe of Levi. He would have never been allowed to serve in the earthly sanctuary, yet He now serves continually in the heavenly sanctuary. The writer concludes this section with the words, "But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises."

The "better covenant" the writer of Hebrews is referring to is the New Covenant, found in Jeremiah 31. In Hebrews 8:8-12 he quotes from Jeremiah 31:31-34, but prior to that quote he writes, "if that first covenant had been faultless there would have been no occasion sought for a second." The word "faultless" in verse 7 does not refer to the Mosaic covenant itself, but rather the Israelites' inability to keep it. He writes in verse 8, "For finding fault with them." Israel failed in their responsibilities under the Mosaic covenant and the penalty for that failure, according to Deuteronomy 28, had come upon them. They were taken out of the Land into exile, the first temple was destroyed, and they were unable to produce righteousness acceptable to God.

The writer of Hebrews concludes by stating the New Covenant made the Mosaic covenant obsolete. The Greek word for "obsolete" is *pa-lay-oh*, which in the perfect tense means "old in the sense of uselessness and continues to be so." The Mosaic covenant was never intended to produce justification apart from the sacrificial system, and it served as a means of pointing people to the coming Messiah (Galatians 3:24). It was a covenant that was temple-dependent. The tearing of the temple's veil at the moment of Messiah's death, and the destruction of the temple in 70 AD, is alluded to when he writes, "But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear."

Hebrews 8:8-12 NASB

⁸ For finding fault with them, He says, "Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when I will effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; ⁹ Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; for they did not continue in My covenant, and I did not care for them, says the Lord. ¹⁰ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ¹¹ And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, and everyone his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for all will know Me, from the least to the greatest of them. ¹² For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."

UNEXPECTED PHONE CALL

A while back, staff member Anna and her husband, Vladimir, began praying for their neighbor Igor* - that God would put him into circumstances that would bring him to faith. Sometime later, Igor lost his job. He began looking for another contract, but nothing came up. He was calm because he had enough savings to last for a few years. Vladimir and Anna kept praying as time went on. Recently, when the friends were all having lunch together, Igor shared that he was still unemployed and his savings were running out. What to do? Anna answered: "I can pray, but you must agree, and say 'Amen.'" Igor laughed but agreed. So Anna prayed for God to send Igor a good job in Jesus' name, and he said, "Amen." The very next morning he called Anna and said, "I just got a call from a very prestigious company. They invited me for an interview." Anna said, "God is answering our prayer!" Igor answered, "Would you please continue praying for me? It looks like God hears you!"

A RABBI MEETS A DOCTOR

Recently, our worker Larry went for his annual eye exam, and his Jewish optometrist, a smart-looking man in his mid-forties, noticed that Larry was Jewish. He also noticed that Larry had listed "Messianic rabbi" as his occupation on the paperwork. Clearly intrigued, the doctor put down his notepad and asked, "How did you become a Messianic rabbi, and what is that?" Larry shared how he came to faith in Yeshua, and the doctor responded by commenting on antisemitism and the persecution of the Jewish people over the last 200 years. The doctor kept asking questions (he was very interested) and finally said to Larry, "Maybe we should talk a little bit about your eyes now... and if you don't mind, I can give

you a discount because of what you do." Wow! Larry thanked him and invited him to services at his Messianic congregation, Shuvah Israel. Please pray for the doctor, that he and Larry will have more chances to speak and that he might visit the congregation soon and accept Yeshua!

A SECOND CHANCE INTRODUCTION

A few years ago, staff member Jon and his wife Tammy met Laurie,* a Jewish woman, at a Christian wedding they were attending. As it turns out, Jon and Laurie attended the same high school. Jon, Tammy, and Laurie continued to chat and get to know each other, but once Laurie found out that her new

friends were Messianic Jews, she abruptly walked away. Tammy and Jon stood there shocked!

Fast forward a few years. Recently, Jon was finishing up one of his shifts at the hospital where he serves as a chaplain, and this particular day he stayed unusually late. He started talking to a new volunteer who was just beginning her shift. They made introductions and the woman said, "I know you, I met you at the wedding!" At first Jon didn't remember her, but later he realized that this was the same woman who walked away from him and Tammy a few years before! The Lord works in awesome ways and clearly God did something to change Laurie's desire to hear the Gospel!

**names have been changed*



Our worker Boris G. and his wife, Shulamit, spent three weeks doing ministry in the Ukraine. They began in the western part of the country, the city of Lvov, which unfortunately has a long history of antisemitism. Even so, Boris was encouraged to lead over 30 Christians in the ministry's five-day Summer Training and Evangelism Program (STEP). This outreach included teaching on specific Jewish topics, as well as practical street evangelism. Each day during STEP the volunteers

bravely went out on the streets of Lvov and shared the love of Yeshua and challenged people to care about Jewish evangelism. This program was a partnership with the Chosen People Ministries staff in Germany and Finland. It was team work and as a result, Boris received contact information from hundreds of Jewish and non-Jewish people who want to learn more about the Lord. Please pray for a successful follow-up program.

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