



Teaching for Shabbat During Sukkot 2022
By Moshe Schwab

We began a new year on the feast of Yom Teruah. Yom Teruah is also known as Rosh Hashanah which means the head of the year. It is the year 5783 in the Gregorian year 2022. So have a happy 5783! At times like these we should consider what we value and try to live more in the truth. Life is a mix of things to do. How important are your spiritual values? It is not a matter of preference, but a matter of pursuing truth and living that out.

What is truth? Some people think that truth is what each person makes up. This is so sad. People make up all kinds of ridiculous things. They are delusional. Who do they think they are? A person may think they are George Washington, the first President of the United States, but they are not. So, what makes people think that they can make up just anything to be truth? They say that they do not need any help with their lives. I have talked to people like this. They say they are fine without God. That is what the atheist God rejecting leaders of the 20th century thought and they killed 101 million people.

Do not be fooled by their lies. They may say that what they do is for the good of the people. That is what the atheist Hitler said and then he killed 11 million of his own people. Mankind needs God's values to live by. That is why an all-knowing God gave us His commandments. Isaiah 55:8-9 NKJV says, "'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' says the LORD. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.'"

Have you ever thought that someone could have a better idea than you? I worked in research, and you have to be open to ideas and possibilities when you do research. So, if we are smart, believing and accepting the advice of an all-knowing God should be first on our to do list. I want to do what is right. Don't you? Or do you want to just go along in life like the rest of those who bring evil into this world because they thought anything they came up with is okay and will bring no harm. Anyone in their right mind does not think that all of their own ideas are truth. They realize that truth must be something outside of themselves. Anyone with any amount of intelligence realizes that everyone has different pursuits and ideas about life. Are their millions or billions of truths as there are people? Is there truth out there that we can really count on?

Consider this point. When you want to make something, we often look for resources on how to accomplish our project and succeed. Often, we will hire someone with expertise to do the work, especially on complicated and important projects so we do not waste our time or money. Now

consider the average response to life that many people have. They think that they know what is right without considering a proper source. I once heard someone tell their child to not let anyone tell them what to do. Wow, what terrible advice! They set their child up to be a complete failure. Anyone knows that they do not have all the answers for life. There is so much pain and problems in this world that does not have to happen. Mankind continues to make up their own selfish ideals because they do not want to live right.

So, we need to seek truth and there is no better truths than what the Bible has to say. The Bible has been helping people to live right for thousands of years! The Bible says that God's truths in the Bible are for all of time. Psalms 117:2 NKJV says, "For His merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of the LORD endures forever." These have been tested truths. People live them out and find out that they work.

God is right because he knows all. He is the creator, so he knows what is best for us and wants what is best for us. Psalms 119:137-138 NKJV says, "Righteous are You, O LORD, and upright are Your judgments. Your testimonies, which You have commanded, are righteous and very faithful." God is righteous; therefore, He is right about all that He says and does. God's decrees are true and good, and God's commandments are right and true for life; they are faithful. That is not true about the ideas of mankind. They may or may not be right and true for life.

Work on pursuing God's truths instead of the thoughts and ideas of the worldly. Rabbi Yochanan puts the worldly thinking of mankind into perspective when he says in 1 John 2:16 NKJV, "For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world." Lust means desires. The desires of the flesh refers to those physical things the Bible says we are to avoid like sexual sins, the worship of things, the worship of idols, the worship of people, other types of sin, etcetera. Our eyes can lead us to have wrong sinful desires. Our innermost desires can be sinful, and we should absolutely watch out for that. God's ways are truth and not mankind's thoughts and ideas on life.

Worldly pride refers to trusting in our own thoughts and ideas and doing things our way instead of doing what is right. Yochanan is not talking about the satisfaction that comes from accomplishment, but the pride that comes from committing sin and wanting to do things that are wrong and evil. Sin is evil because it is deviant to the process of the true and good life that God wants for mankind. These people say, where is God, but they deny God and bring evil into the world because of their sin.

Let us be a people who are open to truth and living out the truths of our good and kind God who has revealed His goodness to us. We are not a people who want to fail, but to succeed in life and the true ways of life through our creator and God.

Since this is still Sukkot, it is still relevant to talk a little more about the scriptures regarding Sukkot.

Scriptures about Sukkot

Leviticus 23:39-43 CJB:

39 Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the Lord for seven days; on the first day there shall be a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest.

40 And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days.

41 You shall keep it as a feast to the Lord for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month.

42 You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths,

43 that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.

Summary and Comments on Leviticus 23:39-43

Erev Sukkot is the beginning of the fifteenth day of the 7th month in the evening, v. 39

Erev Sukkot refers to the first evening of Sukkot. Evening and morning were the first day; so, the biblical or Jewish day of the feast starts in the evening. Sukkot was one of the three required pilgrimage feasts¹ for those living in Israel.

It is a required feast for every believer in Yeshua because they are God's feasts (see Leviticus 23:2). There is historical evidence that early believers in Yeshua observed God's feasts. Since the early believers in Yeshua kept the feasts, this should be accepted doctrine and practice. Also, there are many Messianic correlations regarding Sukkot and the other biblical feasts. They are, after all, God's feasts.

We should celebrate the three main feasts with other believers in the Messiah just as Israel was to celebrate these feasts together.² It makes sense; believers in the true God celebrated the feasts together and so should Messianic believers in the true God.³ Messianic correlations and teachings should be included for those who believe in Yeshua because we are in a Messianic

¹ “The Three Pilgrimage Festivals, in Hebrew Shalosh Regalim (שלוש רגלים), are three major festivals in Judaism—Pesach (Passover), Shavuot (Weeks or Pentecost), and Sukkot (Tabernacles, Tents or Booths)—when the ancient Israelites living in the Kingdom of Judah would make a pilgrimage to Temple in Jerusalem, as commanded by the Torah. In Jerusalem, they would participate in festivities and ritual worship in conjunction with the services of the kohanim (“priests”) at the Temple.” Quoted from, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three_Pilgrimage_Festivals.

² The Messiah Yeshua said that someday it would not be necessary for all people to come up to Jerusalem for the feasts, but it was to be done in other areas of the world. **This has come to pass.** “The time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Yerushalayim ... the true worshippers will worship the Father spiritually and truly, for these are the kind of people the Father wants worshipping him. God is spirit; and worshippers must worship him spiritually and truly.” John 4:21, 23-24 CJB.

³ Ya’akov (James) as leader of the early believers of Yeshua the Messiah when talking about the Gentiles said essentially that they need to get grounded in the Torah; that implies that Gentiles also need to keep the feasts of God. Talking about new believing Gentiles: “For from the earliest times, Moshe has had in every city those who proclaim him, with his words being read in the synagogues every Shabbat;” Acts 15:21 CJB.

age. Not only does our family celebrate Sukkot with other believers in Yeshua, but we try every day of the feast to recognize Sukkot and talk about Sukkot.

Sukkot is a time to remember God’s provision, v. 39.

Sukkot follows the harvest and so it should remind us of God’s provision. This idea of provision sounds familiar to people in the Americas because we have a Thanksgiving Day in the Fall. According to some historians, we have this day because the earliest settlers of the American colonies (the Pilgrims) observed God’s feasts.

*We should remember how God provided
for us both physically and spiritually*

We should not only remember how God has provided for us physically, but how He has provided for us spiritually through the Messiah. In this Messianic age, Sukkot would be an appropriate time to celebrate what the Holy Spirit has done for us. Rabbi Shaul (Paul) said that believers in Yeshua (Jesus) have the Holy Spirit living in them; “Don’t you know that your body is a temple for the Ruach HaKodesh who lives inside you;” 1 Corinthians 6:19 CJB. The Holy Spirit is our spiritual helper to help us follow God and keep His commandments (John 14:26). We have the Holy Spirit in this temporary body just like a sukkah is a temporary structure that is sometimes lived in during Sukkot. And like I said, it is the working and presence of God in our lives just like Israel had the presence of God with them in the desert.

We are to rest from our regular jobs and unnecessary work on the 1st and 8th day, v. 39.

The Eighth Day is simply a day of rest after the closing of Sukkot. That is what it was in second Temple times before 70 AD.⁴ Of course, they had customs and extra practices in the second Temple period, but extra observances do not need to be practiced. The Eighth Day has taken on extra practices and meaning including celebrating the end of the cycle of Torah reading (Simchat Torah). This practice is not commanded in the Torah and should not be done.⁵ It is man-made doctrine; Isaiah 29:13 NKJV says, “Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men.” Remember, idols are also man-made.

The Eighth Day is a picture of our future eternal life with God and having extra activities on this day hides this meaning. It all fits together:

Yom Teruah is a picture of Yeshua’s return.

Yom Kippur is a picture of the judgment to follow.

⁴ Referring to the Eighth Day of Sukkot: “Owing, however, to the fact that both Shemini Atzeret and the seventh day of Pesah are described as atzeret, the name was taken to mean “the closing festival.” Quoted from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shemini_Atzeret, under Biblical Origins. The Eighth Day is simply a closing day of rest. Traditional observances have been added such as, Hoshana Rabbah, Shemini Atzeret, Simchat Torah. These extra observances are added and do not need to be practiced. Sometimes a biblical type of observance can often emulate the purposes of God and are not entirely bad. People often get carried away though and make these extra observances into laws. Sometimes these extra practices are wrong as in the case of The Eighth Day.

⁵ Extra practices can sometimes add unnecessary burdens on believers and God commanded us not to add unnecessary laws. “In order to obey the mitzvot of ADONAI your God which I am giving you, do not add to what I am saying, and do not subtract from it;” Deuteronomy 4:2 CJB.

Sukkot is a picture of the great feast to follow for those in the future kingdom. The Eighth Day is a picture of our future eternal life.

The Bible says we are to take some beautiful fruit and branches from different tree species and rejoice before God on the first day and to rejoice for 7 days, v. 40.

It does not specify how this is to be done, so long as it is done. Ceremonies surrounding the shaking of a lulav are made up by man and are not binding. We can do this in other ways.

The lulav tradition:

The lulav consists of an etrog, and palm, myrtle, and willow branches. These four species are shaken together with the etrog up; to the right, to the back, to the left, and to the front up and down. This shaking is done three times in each position.

When we shake our branches during our rejoicing, we can also shake. It is called an offering and it is like we are making an offering of ourselves. Shaul said, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God; Romans 12:1 NKJV. Since we are to rejoice with branches and fruit, this festival can also remind us that we are to give ourselves to the Lord; we are to live for the Lord. Also, as we shake our branches in various directions it reminds us how God is everywhere and is our provider. I often shake my branches up towards the sky as a form of rejoicing.

Using nice looking branches from all or some of the three species mentioned in the Bible would be preferable only if available; it does not mention that we must use all three. A specific fruit is not mentioned as long as the fruit we use looks nice. Prescribed methods give us a way to celebrate but are extra laws and not binding. The important thing is to rejoice before God. We can also decorate for the holiday using branches and various fruits.⁶ Since the specifics of how we rejoice are not mentioned, decorating would also be an acceptable way to rejoice before the Lord. I prefer to rejoice before God by waving beautiful branches before the Lord, and we do some decorating in our sukkah and in our home so that we rejoice before the Lord during the whole time of Sukkot.

We should also be thinking how the Holy Spirit helps us to be a tzadiq (righteous), to do what is right. Righteousness is to do what is right. This connects with the command to take beautiful fruit and branches. Believers should exude the beauty of God through how they live. The work of the Holy Spirit is beautiful to God because it helps us to do what is right and be just. The Bible says that those that do what is right will see God's face. "For ADONAI is righteous; he loves righteousness; the upright will see his face;" Psalm 11:7 CJB. The context of Zephaniah 3:17-18 is about a future time and Messianic kingdom. It talks about those who have desired to follow God by observing God's feasts:

Zephaniah 3:17-18 CJB

ADONAI your God is right there with you, as a mighty savior. He will rejoice over you and be glad, he will be silent in his love, he will shout over you with joy. "I will

⁶ Putting out a bowl of fruit and decorating with branches are a couple good ways to rejoice before the Lord. We also hang up fake fruit in our home and our Sukkah for decorations. In the past we have cut out pictures of fruit and wrote the fruits of the Holy Spirit in them for decoration. There are lots of appropriate ways to decorate for Sukkot and the biblical holidays.

gather those of yours who grieve over the appointed feasts and bear the burden of reproach [because they cannot keep them].⁷

God's appointed feasts are to be kept. If we have not been observing them, it may take some time to get used to the idea, but God gave us His feasts so that our calendar revolves around Him. Our lives should revolve around God anyway, right? Our lives often revolve around secular holidays like Thanksgiving or New Year's Day. By using the biblical calendar and observing God's feasts, we live more around God and His past, present, and future acts of favor (His "chane" in Hebrew which means grace). Shabbat is a feast that we get to observe every week and it is the high point and end of our week.

Also, another point about the Holy Spirit is that the Holy Spirit can help us to have good fruit in our lives; Shaul talks about the Holy Spirit helping us to have positive results (fruit); "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, self control;" Galatians 5:22-23 CJB. As a Messianic harvest festival, Sukkot is also a celebration of the fruit or results of the Holy Spirit working in the lives of those who desire to be a tzadiq (a righteous person), a person who wants to live right.

Sukkot is to last 7 days and it is to be observed forever, v. 41.

Sukkot itself is to last 7 days and the practices associated with it last 7 days. There is a final day of rest after Sukkot on the 8th day. The Bible says the Feast of Sukkot is to be observed forever, so it has not been done away with as some say.

Israel was to live in a sukkah (tent, hut, or secluded place)⁸ for 7 days as a memorial for their time in the desert, vv. 42-43

It is surely okay to stay in a temporary structure for Sukkot, but is not necessary for Messianic believers because our bodies are now "temples" of the Holy Spirit as previously mentioned.⁹ The "Tent of Meeting" or Mishkan in the wilderness is where the presence of God manifested itself in a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night for 40 years every day. Believers in the Messiah have the presence of the Holy Spirit every day in our lives if we do not grieve the Holy Spirit. "Don't cause grief to God's Ruach HaKodesh;" Ephesians 4:30 CJB. Causing grief to the Holy Spirit is not allowing the Holy Spirit to do its work in us by disobeying God and so the presence of God is not manifest (is not showing) in us.

A temporary residence or sukkah can be anything we do not live in on a permanent basis like a cabin, barn, or tent etcetera. In the time of Yeshua, they used their sukkah for animals and for raising their Passover lamb. Yeshua was born in a sukkah on Rosh Hashanah; see Luke 2:7. It is really simple; the family did not need their sukkah yet because it was Rosh Hashanah. The blowing of the trumpets on Rosh Hashanah heralded the coming of the king, namely the

⁷ Other translations translate Zephaniah 3:18 out of context and remove the reference to God's feasts. Any believer in the time Zephaniah was written would understand that **the assembling of believers took place on God's feasts.**

⁸ "h5521. סֻכָּה sukkâ; fem of 5520; a hut or lair:— booth, cottage, covert, pavilion, tabernacle, tent." Enhanced Strong's Dictionary.

⁹ "Don't you know that your body is a temple for the Ruach HaKodesh who lives inside you;" 1 Corinthians 6:19 CJB.

Messiah King Yeshua. Some believe that Yeshua was born on Sukkot, but I believe that He was born on Rosh Hashanah, and I detail why in my article on Rosh Hashanah.¹⁰

Yeshua was the physical presence of God in Israel just as the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night were the presence of God for Israel in the desert. The Bible said Yeshua “tabernacled” or tented among us referring to the Tent of Meeting in the desert where Israel saw the presence of God. So, the scripture referring to be “tabernacled” refers to the presence of God being among us and not a particular day.

For Messianic believers Sukkot is a time to remember God’s provision and presence with Israel in the desert wilderness. It is a time to remember the provision and presence of God in the lives of believers in Yeshua through the Holy Spirit. Through the presence of God in us and the Holy Spirit, we return at least in part to the fellowship with God that He has always wanted for mankind.¹¹ “What we have seen and heard, we are proclaiming to you; so that you too may have fellowship with us. Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Yeshua the Messiah;” 1 John 1:3 CJB.

Also, a couple of the themes of Sukkot have to do with water and light. In the Temple period, the Jews had a water ceremony and also had a lighting show during Sukkot. Those who have the Holy Spirit have living water (in them in the form of the Holy Spirit) and are able to tell others about this living water from God. Yeshua tells us to come to him and drink. He said, “Whoever puts his trust in me, as the Scripture says, rivers of living water will flow from his inmost being! (Now he said this about the Spirit);” John 7:38-39 CJB. Also, those who receive the, “light of the word” who is Yeshua, also become lights to others. (Matthew 5:14; John 9:5).¹²

During Sukkot, families can form Messianic traditions like eating outside or going camping. Just like it was important for Israel to remember God’s provision for them in the wilderness and the presence of God at the Mishkan (Tent of Meeting), it is important for us in this Messianic age to understand that God takes care of us and that we also have the presence of God in us and the work of the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives (Colossian 1:27; Acts 1:8).¹³

¹⁰ Most agree that Yeshua was born in the Fall and not in the Winter because it would be too cold for the shepherds to be in the field in the Winter. Also, because the accommodations were sparse at the time Yeshua was born, we know that it was a major Jewish holiday. Rosh Hashanah makes the best sense since it is the day the trumpets sound. When the trumpets sounded the shepherds could take off work because it announced the beginning of a holiday, and they could go look for the messiah that the angels had announced to them. Another name for Rosh Hashanah is Yom Teruah which means day of shouting and the angels were shouting about the coming of the messiah. None of the other feasts have quite this correlation to the coming of the messiah. Passover correlates with Yeshua giving Himself as the Passover lamb for our sins and does not really correlate with His birth. Almost all scholars believe Yeshua was born during either Rosh Hashanah or Sukkot. I wrote an article on why Yeshua was born on Rosh Hashanah (<https://www.teshuvahsa.org/observing-the-feasts>).

¹¹ Shaul says now he knows in part, but in the future kingdom he will know fully. “Now I know partly; then I will know fully;” 1 Corinthians 13:12 CJB.

¹² “You are light for the world;” Matthew 5:14 CJB. Yeshua said, “I am the light of the world;” John 9:5 CJB

¹³ “God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory;” Colossians 1:27 NKJV. Christ is the word Messiah or Anointed One. Also, in Acts it says, “But you will receive power when the Ruach HaKodesh comes upon you;” Acts 1:8 CJB.