

September 2007



Israel after Sukkot
There are a few spaces left.
Ask the Lord if you are to join
us from Oct. 21 - Nov 2.

High Holy Day Greetings in Yeshua,

Celebrate the Feasts

The three fall feasts of the Lord, as outlined in Leviticus chapter 23, occur in September and early October this year. As Messianic Jews, we begin to celebrate each feast on the evening of the feast and continue the following day. The High Holy Days are early this year: *Yom Teruah/Rosh HaShana* begins on the evening of Wednesday, September 12. *Yom Kippur* begins on the evening of Friday, September 21 and *Sukkot*, the *Feast of Tabernacles* on the evening of Wednesday, September 26. *Hoshana Rabbah* begins the evening of October 3. *Simcha Torah* starts the evening of Friday, October 5.

We move from a focus on **repentance** (*t'shuvah*) at *Yom Teruah*, literally the "day of blowing the shofar," to **redemption** on *Yom Kippur*, to **rejoicing** during *Sukkot*. The final fall feast is a glorious culmination of appointments with the God of Israel. *Sukkot* is a prophetic feast, a decidedly Messianic feast, and the feast that we want to explore with you this month. As you search your hearts at the sounding of the shofar, and fast on the Day of Atonement, remember that God always moves from darkness to light. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning." (Psalm 30:5) Prepare to receive the joy of the Lord during *Sukkot*. We need His joy; it is our strength (Neh. 8:10)!

The Palm: Symbol of Sukkot

Living in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, we are surrounded by palm trees (*Ta-mar-EEM* in Hebrew), but many people don't realize that palms are part of the Jerusalem landscape as well. Date palms are found all over Israel. The honey of the "land flowing with milk and honey" is actually date honey.

The palm has become one of the major symbols of the *Sukkot* feast, based on a verse in Leviticus 23: "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles [*Sukkot*] for seven days to the Lord'" (Leviticus 23:34). "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. 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. You shall dwell in booths for seven days." (Leviticus 23:40-42)

The booths, (Hebrew *Sukkot*, sue-COAT) that Jewish people erect on balconies, in backyards and outside synagogues, have temporary roofs made of branches. In Florida, Israel and other parts of the world, these branches are almost always palm branches. Enough space is left between the layers of branches to be able to see the stars at night.

Jewish people not only eat and sleep under palm branches at *Sukkot*, they also wave them before the Lord as directed in Leviticus 23:40. Three types of trees are grouped in a bundle about one yard long called a *lulav* (LU-lahv). These include palm branches, myrtle branches and willow branches. The name *lulav* actually means "palm branch," but it has come to encompass the three species grouped as one. The part of the palm tree used in a *lulav* is the newly sprouted shoot that grows at the top of a date palm at its heart (*Lev* in Hebrew). This is probably symbolic, since the *lulav* is waved in worship, which must be from the heart.

The *lulav* is held, together with a choice fruit called an *etrog* (citron), and waved in six directions: north, south, east, west, down and up. The sovereignty of God is proclaimed, and the Hallel Psalms are recited. This includes Psalms 113-118. One of our favorite verses, Psalm 118:25 is chanted as the *lulav* is waved toward the heavens: "Save now, I pray, O Lord; O Lord, I pray, send now prosperity." In Hebrew: "Ana Adonai hoshiah na; Ana Adonai hazlihah na."

The waving of the *lulav* in all directions is also symbolic of God's heart for the entire world. *Sukkot* is the one feast of the Lord that specifically includes non-Jews. It is universal and prophetic. The Lord will be King over **ALL** the earth!

The Palm in the *Lulav*

There are various rabbinic sayings concerning the palm branch in the *lulav*. One is that the palm corresponds to the spine of a human being and symbolizes the desired uprightness, rectitude and integrity that God desires. (The myrtle represents the eyes, the willow, the mouth and the *etrog*, the heart.) In this way, the *lulav* and *etrog* symbolize bodily dedication to God.

Other rabbinic sayings: "Like the palm tree which has a single heart that keeps reaching upwards, so Israel has a single heart reaching upwards—up to their Father in heaven." *Pesikta Rabbati* 51.2 May this become reality, Lord, for us and all Israel! "A dry *lulav* is not permissible because it is written, "The dead do not praise the Lord" (Psalm 115:17). *Yerushalmi Sukkah* 53c

There are various flaws that invalidate a *lulav*. Religious Jews are scrupulous in choosing just the right palm branch, willow branches and myrtle branches for their worship at *Sukkot*. Only the very best, the closest to perfection, are acceptable for the worship of God at *Sukkot*! If the palm leaves are not attached to the spine, it is invalid. If most of the outside palm leaves are cut off, it is invalid. If the top is cut off, it is invalid. If the top of the spine is bent, it is invalid. If the spine is split down the middle, it is invalid. To see this minute examination of the *lulav* by Orthodox Jews in Jerusalem, order the "Samech" program from the Jewish Jewels Hebrew Aleph-Bet Series.

Just as flaws invalidate a *lulav*, flaws invalidate believers. In our position as head of a congregation for the past year and a half, we have seen many of these flaws and their painful invalidating effects: The woman who justifies her rudeness by saying that she was only kidding, the husband who ministers to others in temple and verbally abuses his wife in private, the believer of many years who can't control his temper, the gifted sister who refuses to be a team player. Pray and ask the *Ruach HaKodesh* if **you** have any invalidating flaws. As King David said in Psalm 139:23, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

...Like the Palm!

We are told in Psalm 92:12-15 that, "The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age. They shall be fresh and flourishing, to declare that the Lord is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him."

In this psalm, King David likens the righteous to the palm tree. Before we discuss the implications of this for Messianic believers, consider what one traditional Jewish scholar, Israel Abrahams, had to say about the righteous and the palm: "The comparison alludes both to the beauty and the material value of the tree, to its stately height and to its sweet fruit." Mr. Abrahams goes on to say that as the ideal Israel represented righteousness, so the palm became a type of Israel's national and religious life. The Romans felt that the tree was so intimately connected with the Jews, that when they struck a medal to commemorate the fall of Jerusalem, Judea was represented as a woman weeping under a palm tree.

Many years ago, we received a teaching from Bill Gothard concerning believers in *Yeshua* and their connection to the palm tree. We are still fascinated by this information on the palm.

#1. Palm trees can withstand abuse.

Most trees have a vulnerable exterior and a dead heart. If you score an ordinary tree all around the trunk, it will die. The life of the palm tree is on the inside. It has a living heart. Outward abuse does not affect its life or the quality of its fruit. (See II Corinthians 4:16.)

#2. Palm trees can endure storms.

We have lived through enough Florida hurricanes to have seen this first hand. Strong winds break ordinary trees because their leaves catch the wind. The palm tree, on the other hand, has leaves that let the wind pass through. The palm bends low but does not break. (See II Corinthians 4:7-11.) [Palms can also be uprooted, even when mature, and flourish in their new location.]

#3. Palm trees can survive drought.

The roots of the palm are unusually thick and strong. They do not taper and branch like ordinary roots. Palm trees send their roots deep into the ground, reaching water sources not available on the surface. (See Ephesians 3:16-19.)

#4. Older palms produce sweeter fruit.

While ordinary fruit trees produce less fruit with age, both in quantity and quality, palm trees produce sweeter fruit as they age. In fact, palms don't even bear fruit until they mature, which may take up to 50 years! (See Psalm 92:14-15.)

This *Sukkot*, as we look at the *lulav*, let us meditate on the fact that as believers in *Yeshua* the Messiah, we have been made righteous (I Corinthians 1:30), and as such, will flourish like a palm tree. We can endure storms and come out victorious. As we bend low (humble ourselves), God exalts us in due time. We can survive drought. We may pass through dry, desert times of testing, but we have roots that go deep into the love of God and the living waters of *Yeshua*. We will remain green, fresh and flourishing! We will still bear fruit in old age. We will grow in godly character and have sweeter dispositions, be more like *Yeshua*, and exhibit more of the fruit of His spirit as we enter our golden years. It is glorious to be a palm tree believer!

The *Lulav*: Symbol of Victory

The *lulav*—palm branch—has also been seen by Jewish sages as a symbol of victory. Lifting the *lulav* expresses joy and victory as when a trophy is lifted in the air. Remember Deborah, the prophetess and judge of Judges 4:5? We are told in the Bible that she sat under the palm tree of Deborah where the children of Israel came to her for judgment. When someone received a favorable ruling from Deborah, they left her presence waving a palm. Revelation chapter 7 speaks of the final victory of the righteous who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. This great multitude of all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues, stand before the Lamb with palm branches (*lulavim*) in their hands (Revelation 7:9).

Another aspect of victory connected with the waving of palms is the ceremony of circling the altar during *Sukkot*, waving the *lulavim*, and chanting Psalm 118 which includes phrases such as, "I called on the Lord in distress; the Lord answered me..." (Verse 5) "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Verse 6) "The Lord is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation." (Verse 14) VICTORY, VICTORY, VICTORY. "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord." (Verse 17) MORE VICTORY!

Psalm 118:25 includes the phrase *Hoshiana* (Hosanna), "Save now," and is followed by, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!..." (Verse 26) Just as the Israelites marched seven times

around Jericho ("the city of palm trees") until victory was theirs, Jews throughout the ages have marched around synagogues seven times on the last or seventh day of *Sukkot*, *Hoshana Rabbah*, waving palm branches, crying out *Hoshiana*, "Save Now," and looking forward to the victorious coming of King Messiah. (He did, of course, come riding on a donkey into Jerusalem amidst the waving of palms and the chanting of Psalm 118:26—"Baruch haba b'shem Adonai"—"Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!") Christians call this day "Palm Sunday."

Anticipate the Glory!

We are victorious because God tabernacles with us in the person of His Spirit, sent to us when our Messiah *Yeshua* ascended back into heaven. Our bodies, as temporary dwellings (*sukkot*) of His presence, are in a sense like the Temple of old that housed the Glory of God. We read in I Kings 8 that King Solomon dedicated the first Temple in Jerusalem at "the feast" (*HaHag-Sukkot*) in the seventh month. Amidst worshippers carrying their *lulavim* and chanting Psalm 118 among other verses, the ark of the covenant was brought into its place—The Most Holy Place. "And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord." (I Kings 8:10-11)

May the glory of God fill **your house** and **your congregation** this *Sukkot*. May the Lord **save now** and **send prosperity now** to all our Jewish Jewels partners. May each of you flourish as the palm tree in *Yeshua*'s name!

Love in Him,

Mei & Jamie

P.S. **The Feasts of the Lord** by Kevin Howard and Marvin Rosenthal gives an excellent overview of all the biblical feasts. It is filled with beautiful full color illustrations. A perfect gift item!

P.P.S. **The Irrevocable Calling** by Daniel C. Juster shows how Israel was uniquely chosen to bless the world. This little book is an excellent summary of Israel's calling.

GOD BLESS YOU FOR SENDING IN YOUR "LOVE BASKET" OFFERINGS FOR ISRAEL.

Jewish Jewels Television Airtime Schedule - September 2007

LOCAL TV STATIONS

STATE:	CITY:	STATIONS:	AIRTIME:
AK	North Pole	KJNP TV 4	TUE 6:00 PM
CA	Sonoma	PUBLIC ACCESS 8	MON 8:30 PM
FL	Tampa/St. Pete.	WCLF TV22	SUN 2:30 PM
FL	Orlando/Cocoa	WLCB TV 45	SUN 1:30 PM
FL	Miami/Ft. Laud.	WHFT TV 45	THU 11:30 AM
FL	West Palm Beach	WFGC TV 61	SAT 10:30 PM
IL	Peoria	FAITH ALIVE CH 20	FRI 6:00 PM
NJ/NY	NJ/New York	WMBC TV 63	SUN 4:00 PM
OH	Columbus	WSFJ TV 51	SUN 3:30 PM
OR	Portland	K26GJ TV 26	SUN 12:00 PM
OR	Salem	K21GX TV 21	SUN 12:00 PM
PA	Philadelphia	WFMZ TV 69	SUN 9:30 AM
SC	Greenville	WGS TV 16	FRI 10:30 AM

SATELLITE NETWORKS

SKY ANGEL
 Angel Two - SUN 2:30 PM (EST) [Ch. 9702]
 GTN - SUN 3:30 PM (EST) [Ch. 9707]

DirectTV
 World Harvest TV (WHT) - SUN 3:00 PM (EST) [Ch. 321]

Galaxy 16
 World Harvest TV(WHT)- SUN 5:00 PM (EST) [Ch. 121]

God TV - The GOD Channel
 WED 4:30 AM (GMT) & 6:30 AM (Jerusalem)

Australian Christian Channel (ACC)
 THU 8:00 AM (AEST)

Satellite Receiver
 WHT-Galaxy 16-Transpondent 15 - SUN 3:00 PM (EST)



INTERNATIONAL Philippines - Shalom TV THU 6:00 PM

INTERNET www.jewishjewels.org www.acctv.com.au
