

Sukkot begins the evening

of October 1, 2001

Dear Fellow Pilgrims,

Sukkot: A Feast Of The Lord

The Biblical Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*) begins on October 1, 2001 and continues through October 9, 2001. This feast is referred to many times in both the *Tenach* (Old Testament) and the *Brit Hadasha* (New Testament). We'd like to share some of these references with you so that you can enjoy the richness of what is possibly the most significant and prophetic Messianic feast.

And Made Booths For His Livestock

"And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, built himself a house, and made booths for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth." Genesis 33:17

The shelters or booths that Jacob made for his livestock upon his return to the land of Canaan following his reunion with his brother Esau, are called *Succot* in Hebrew. This was the Hebrew custom of the time. There were no such things as "mangers." When Mary (*Miriam*), the mother of the Messiah, gave birth to her son, it was probably in a *Sukkah* or booth, a temporary dwelling, a place where animals were sheltered. How appropriate that the LAMB OF GOD should first dwell in a lowly *Sukkah*: *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)* The birth of Yeshua in a *sukkah* points to the very real possibility that the Messiah may have been born at this season of the year.

Three Times Each Year

"Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year: You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread...and the Feast of Harvest...and the Feast of Ingathering, which is at the end of the year, when you have gathered in the fruit of your labors from the field." Exodus 23:15-16

The Feast of Ingathering, another name for Sukkot, the final of the three required feasts, was agricultural in nature. The people brought the first fruits of their harvest to the great Temple in Jerusalem, the rich in silver or golden baskets, the poor in baskets of reeds. Great rejoicing and thanksgiving to God accompanied this harvest celebration. (The Pilgrims based their thanksgiving celebration on it.) This was the final time of the year when all the male Israelites had to appear before the Lord in the Temple. It was a *MOED* or appointed time.

Seven Days in the Seventh Month

"Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, saying: The

fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the Lord." Leviticus 23:33-34

The seventh month is the holiest month on the Jewish calendar (7 being the holiest number). The months are numbered from the first (Biblical) month which begins at Passover. A seven day feast in the seventh month was and continues to be a holy convocation and special time to meet with God.

You Shall Dwell In Booths

"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 dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, 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." Leviticus 23: 42-43

Booths are temporary dwellings, like huts made of branches or pieces of wood. They are usually enclosed on three sides, with lattice, or cloth or twigs and sometimes with plywood. The roof is covered with branches and must allow visibility of the stars at night. Building a *sukkah*, then eating and sleeping in it, is the ultimate Jewish camping experience!

Why did God instruct us to dwell in booths? We had been slaves for over four hundred years and had helped build massive structures called pyramids. The God who set us free instructed us to dwell in booths which would last only a few weeks or months. While the Egyptians built monuments to their gods, the God of Israel desired to dwell with His people. He also wanted His people to forever look back to their wilderness wanderings, and to the God who led them out of bondage.

The *sukkah* has many other layers of meaning as well. First of all, it represents protection as it reminds God's people of the Glory Clouds that protected the children of Israel from the elements as they wandered for forty years in the desert. Next, it represents the faithfulness of God in providing food and clothing for His children on their way to the Promised Land. The *sukkah*, frail and temporary in nature, is a reminder of the brevity of man's life here on earth, which is like a sojourn under God's wings. The *sukkah* points to the God who tabernacles with His people.

Dwelling in a *sukkah* teaches us that material things are not the real source of joy. God is. He chose to call the time when His children leave the comforts of their homes to dwell in booths the "Season of our rejoicing." This reinforces the fact that our joy is not dependent on our possessions. Joy springs from a relationship with the living God!

The *sukkah* is an "equalizer." For seven days each year, both rich and poor live in flimsy dwellings. This reminds us that we are all equal in the sight of God. Finally, the *sukkah* is a picture of the future time when all people will dwell under the bounty of the Lord, and He shall reign over all the earth.

Build A Sukkah Instead Of A Castle

"Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, all is vanity." Ecclesiastes 12:8

The Book of Ecclesiastes is read in synagogues during Sukkot because it speaks of the futility of pursuing pleasure as opposed to the wisdom of fearing God and living for Him. Build a *sukkah*

instead of a castle. Trust in God instead of man. After the collapse of the Twin Towers at the World Trade Center, we are more convinced than ever that one is safer in a makeshift, flimsy *sukkah* with God than in a fortress without Him. He is our security. Our lives are hidden in Him. We are ALL just passing through. The things that really count are the ETERNAL ones.

You Shall Rejoice In Your Feast

"You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, when you have gathered from your threshing floor and from your winepress; and you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your manservant and your maidservant and the Levite, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow, who are within your gates." Deuteronomy 16:13-14

God COMMANDS his people to rejoice at Sukkot! This joy is to be shared with others. Sukkot is an inclusive, prophetic, universal, international FEAST OF THE LORD.

Pray For The Peace Of Jerusalem

"Look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feasts; your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet habitation, a tabernacle (sukkah) that will not be taken down; not one of its stakes will ever be removed, nor will any of its cords be broken." Isaiah 33:20

This is a wonderful promise to claim for Jerusalem this Sukkot! Jerusalem will stand because God says so. This city is still the favorite of the Lord and the place He has chosen as His habitation. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem and prosper (Psalm 122:6).

Don't Wait, Celebrate Now

"And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles." Zechariah 14:16

During the Millennial reign of the Messiah, **all nations** will celebrate Sukkot! There will be a massive aliyah, a going up to Zion to celebrate the Feast of all Feasts. It would seem like a good idea to begin preparing now, especially for Christians who know nothing about Sukkot. This is the destiny of all believers! Tabernacles is not only for the Jewish people. It is for ALL God's people.

Yeshua Rejoiced At "The Feast"

"On the last day, that great day of the feast, Yeshua stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" John 7:37-38

"The feast" mentioned in John 7 is the Feast of Tabernacles, Sukkot, since this is the only one of the Levitical feasts known by this title. (In Hebrew, Sukkot is referred to simply as *Ha Hag*, the Feast). The great day of the feast refers to the final and seventh day, "Hoshana Rabba," the day of the great hosanna. On this special day, Yeshua stated that He was the source of living water. This occurred simultaneously with a water-drawing ceremony in which water was poured out upon the altar, symbolic of both the rain necessary for Israel's harvest and the pouring out of God's Spirit. Great rejoicing accompanied this ceremony, based on the verse from Isaiah 12:3 that says: *"With joy you shall draw water out of the wells of salvation."*

Some Gifts To Rejoice With

We have only scratched the surface with this "teaching" on *Sukkot*. For those of you who would like to continue to study *Sukkot*, we highly recommend **The Fall Feasts of Israel** by Mitch Glaser. It contains sixty pages on *Sukkot* as well as an in-depth study on *Yom Kippur* (the Day of Atonement) and *Rosh HaShanah* (the New Year). This is an excellent reference book that is easy to read.

We are also privileged to offer you the work of Shoshana Silver. Shoshana is a Messianic believer who resides in Haifa, Israel. Her love of Scripture, Jewish history and Israeli dance are passionately expressed in visual form. She recently had four of her original paintings reproduced as greeting cards. Each card has a theme of prayer, praise or worship. They are printed in Israel, and are blank on the inside for your personal communication. They are also suitable for framing.

Rejoicing In The New Jerusalem

"And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle (sukkah) of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.'" Revelation 21:3

When the New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven from God, He will dwell with His children in a marvelous new way. The Bible tells us that God will wipe away every tear from our eyes. There will be no more pain, no more death, no more sorrow. That will surely be the culmination of *Sukkot*, the "season of our rejoicing." We can look forward to JOY, JOY, JOY in the presence of our Lord.

Fear Not !

September 11, 2001, will live as a day of infamy in the history of the United States and of the entire civilized world.

The tragedy touched us personally. Gloria, the sweet lady who opens all of your mail, lost her brother Winston. He was a strong believer in Yeshua and worked in the South Tower of the World Trade Center. Winston did not get out before it collapsed.

This horrific attack was a declaration of war. It is not a war between the United States and Arabs. It is a war between the radical, violent fringe of Islam and the entire civilized world. They see this as a continuation of the conquest of the world begun by Mohammad. This is a spiritual war!

For months, as the Jewish Jewels staff and I have prayed for the situation in Israel, I have been saying: "The genie is out of the bottle. Things will never go back to how they were before the 'uprising'."

Now this war has reached our shores. I was shocked to read an article in this week's Newsweek magazine which used my exact words with one exception. They named the genie... JIHAD. This is an evil spirit that must be fought spiritually.

The attack on the World Trade Center is a spiritual wakeup call. We must all be ready to meet the Lord, and we must all be ready to be part of His army. Remember, *"We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."* Ephesians 6:12

Our ministry is also under attack. Finances are way down. Many of our August bills are still unpaid, and we have not been able to pay our September rent. We have already laid off one employee and are faced with other difficult decisions. We will probably have to stop airing our program in several cities.

Please stand with us in faith. We need your prayers and we need your financial support. Both are crucial.

Neil and Jamie

P.S. Many people are fearful, but God says: "FEAR NOT!" and He says it over and over again. Jamie and I are praying for you and we want you to have the enclosed teaching to comfort you during these trying times.