

Study Notes:

THE 'LAST DAY' OF JOHN 7 – THE 7TH OR 8TH DAY OF THE FEAST?

Notes assembled by C White, Jan 2005

v.1.2

"In [the last day, that great *day* of the feast](#), Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.
He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.
(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)
Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet." (John 7:37-38)

Introductory Comments

Below are merely a collection on notes on the 7th day of Tabernacles and the following 8th day. Thoughts that come to mind are:

- Jewish traditions are helpful, but not final, in understanding the meaning of these days
- We have not always been guided by Jewish traditions to understand these days
- Historic background to the *Hoshana Rabbah* (7th day)
- Historic background to *Shemini Atzeret* (8th day)
- Christ did not always agree with the Jewish traditions whether openly or by inference
- We look through a veil darkly in the first century and it is not always clear what is meant or inferred by NT writers
- Beware of the impact of Babylonianism upon Judaism
- Some argue that the first 6 days = Millennium; the 7th = Last Great Day/Final Judgment; 8th = New Heavens & New Earth
- Others argue first 7 days = Millennium with the 7th being a special Last Great Day culmination of the millennium; 8th = the Final Judgment. Cp John 7 with Rev 7:15-17; 21:4, 6, 17
- The last day of DUB is called a “great” day or “high” day (John 19:31 – Strong’s #3173 = *megas*). The same word used in John 7:37 = *megas* for “great”

Calendar issue

- Jews treat 21st day almost as if it should be a separate feast day. Did they get this wrong? Was this understanding mixed up whilst in captivity and their ceremony and understanding is a transfer from the original understanding for the 8th day? Similarly with Passover, Atonement and a 9th day added to Tabernacles
- In similitude to Passover, Christ was not trying to change the date to the next day. It seems that he was ignoring the traditions of the day. For the Jewish rabbis did not have all the answers and were not all in agreement.
- So, was Christ attempting to transfer this Jewish understanding of the meaning of the 7th day back to its true place – the 8th day – by making His statement in John 7:37-39 late on the 7th/early 8th? See the interesting bits highlighted in blue. For, according to Jewish tradition, the 7th day of Tabernacles pictured judgment. But see Rev 20 where the Great Judgment occurs after the millennium.
- Some Jews did not go along with the Sanhedrin:
- "A special cause of differences was provided by the dates of the festivals, since there was no general agreement on the calendar ... the dates observed ... differed from one another. The Pharisees reckoned their calendar according to the lunar cycle, and brought it where necessary (later by calculated rules) into line with the solar year by adding an extra month. The Essenes, on the other hand, reckoned by the sun." (*The Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Vol. I, p. 627)
- "It was thought that he (Gamaliel) had really made his decision because of mathematical calculations which he had learned from the Rabbis who were his teachers. (Evidently, even as early as 70 C.E., the Rabbis were beginning to realize the weaknesses of the method of setting the time for the beginning of the new month and were relying more on mathematical calculation than on eye-witness accounts.)" (*Story of the Jewish Calendar*, p34 by Azriel Eisenberg re an argument between Rabbi Gamaliel II and Rabbi Joshua)

- "In the Mishnah (*Sukkah* 4.8) the eighth day is called "the last Festival-day of the Feast," while Josephus (*Antiquities* 3.245) clearly refers to the Feast of Tabernacles as an eight-day festival. These clearly refers to the Feast of Tabernacles as an eight-day festival" (J. Ramsey Michaels, *John*, NIBC, p.145).

Interpretation and traditions surrounding the 7th and 8th days

The temple of Jesus' body: the temple theme in the Gospel of John by Alan R. Kerr, pages 229-230 (Sheffield Academic Press, 2002):

7.2.4 The Key Passage.' John 7.37-39

7.2.4.1 Which Day Is the 'Last Day'?

In 7.37-39 Jesus makes his pronouncement on the last day of the festival, the great day. Scholars are undecided whether this is the seventh day or the eighth. Lindars (60) makes the point that, although the eighth day was regarded as a Sabbath and there was worship, the water-pouring ceremony and the illumination of the Court of the Women were omitted. Thus the particular features that gave point to Jesus' words in 7.37, 38 and 8.12 were missing on the eighth day. On the other hand, Bruce Grigsby cites rabbinic texts that answer the question, Why did God provide for as this additional eighth day? They were designed as a homiletic midrash on the Scripture lesson for the eighth day festival'. Grigsby finds that these texts provide valuable insights into the rabbinic understanding of the great feast and its central symbolic act, the water ceremony. He mentions that 'at least one rabbi (R. Judah), suggests that a water ceremony was celebrated on the eighth day (t. Suk. 3.16) (61) So Lindro's point is dubious. Jesus perhaps could have made his pronouncement on the eighth day.

A third possibility is that 'day' in Jn 7.37 has an eschatological tone, signifying that Jesus is pronouncing the end of the old Jewish Festival of Tabernacles and the inaugurating a new one in his person. Mary Coloe, who suggests this line of thought, remarks: [T]he text of verses 37 and 38 supports this interpretation and its eschatological thrust, without becoming totally divorced from its meaning within the feast. (62) She draws attention to other uses of 'the last day' (6.39, 40, 44, 54; 11.24; 12.48) that bear an eschatological reference to the resurrection of the believer. She goes on say:

The next time the reader hears of a 'great' day is the Passover-Sabbath day after the crucifixion (1931). During this Sabbath, 'while it was still dark' and so according to Jewish reckoning, not yet over, Mary Magdalene discovers the empty tomb (20.1). The 'great' day in the Johannine Gospel is the day of Jesus' resurrection, with a promise that the believer will share this resurrection experience. (63)

If, as I have argued above, the context of the 'last day, the great day' has a distinctive Johannine eschatological perspective, then we should not be surprised to find that same perspective continuing from Jn 7.37 into vv. 38 and 39. And indeed we do find the thrust of these verses is eschatological.

Verse 38 looks to the future when rivers of living water will flow; v. 39 refers to the future when the Spirit will be given after Jesus has been glorified. (64)

Within the narrative time of the feast, Coloe opts for the eighth day rather than the seventh. Her reason hinges on the likely absence of the water and light rituals (cf. Suk. 4. I) on the eighth day. She says:

In the stark absence of water rituals and light Jesus announces that the water has not dried up and the light has not been extinguished. He is the source for the thirsty (v. 37) and light for those in darkness (8.12). In asserting the eighth day as most appropriate I point to a key Johannine theme that has been developing throughout the narrative-the paradox of presence in absence. For a Christian community living at the end of the first century when the Temple has been destroyed and they no longer have access to synagogue worship, how can God be present to them? In the absence of a physical Temple, Jesus provides a new Temple where God may be encountered and worshipped (2.21; 4.21). In the absence of water rituals, and Temple candelabras, Jesus provides water and light. (65)

60. Lindars (New Testament Apologetic 297, 298) says we have evidence from Josephus (Ant. 3.247) that there was an eighth day for the feast. Bultmann and Brown assume the seventh day is meant. Hoskyns favours the eighth day.

61. Bruce H. Grigsby, "'If Any Man Thirsts...': Observations on the Rabbinic Background of John 7, 37-39", Bib 67 (1986), pp. 101-108 (103).
62. Coloe, 'The Dwelling of God', p. 185.
63. Coloe, 'The Dwelling of God', p. 185.
64. Coloe ('The Dwelling of God', p. 186) also draws attention to the strong eschatological overtones in Zech. 14, one of the haphtarah readings for the feast of Tabernacles. In n. 53 she says. 'A very thorough discussion on the rich historical and eschatological symbolism of Tabernacles can be found in Bienaime, Aloise et le don de lean, pp. 200-29. In summary, see especially p. 229: "Des tme date ancienne. a la signification primitive de la t'ete des Tents He au rythme des raisons s' etaient ajoutes la commemoration du don de l'eau an desert et l'attente des eaux eschatologiques jaillissant du Temple."'
65. Coloe, 'The Dwelling of God', p. 187. She draws attention to the significance of the eighth day in the post-Easter stories. On the eighth day (also the first day of the Jewish week) Jesus breathes the Spirit on to the disciples (20.19, 20) fulfilling 7.39 and thereby preparing them for his absence. The next eighth day Jesus announces a blessing to all who believe without seeing his presence. 'Within this Gospel the eighth day juxtaposes presence and absence and invites all to experience the eschatological blessings of the eighth day.'

Adam Clarke's Commentary:

"Verse 2. *The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.* -- They sat there formerly by Divine appointment; they sit there now by Divine permission. What our Lord says here refers to their expounding the Scriptures, for it was the custom of the Jewish doctors to sit while they expounded the law and prophets (chap.5:1; Luke 4: 20-22) and to stand up when they read them.

"By the *seat of Moses*, we are to understand authority to teach the law. Moses was the great teacher of the Jewish people; and the scribes, etc., are here represented as his successors.

"Verse 3. *All therefore whatsoever. That is, all those things which they read out of the law and the prophets, and all things which they teach CONSISTENTLY WITH THEM.* This must be our Lord's meaning: He could not have desired them to do everything, without restriction, which the Jewish doctors taught; because himself WARNS his disciples AGAINST THEIR FALSE TEACHING, AND TESTIFIES THAT THEY HAD MADE THE WORD OF GOD OF NONE EFFECT BY THEIR TRADITIONS. See chapter 15:6, etc. Besides, as our Lord speaks here in the past tense -- *whatsoever they HAVE commanded* -- he may refer to the teaching of a former period, when they taught the word of God in truth, or *were much less corrupted than they were now.*"

Understanding the Jewish Calendar, by Rabbi Nathan Bushwick:

"The second *dechiah* prevents Yom Kippur from falling the day before or the day after Shabbos. **This is avoided so that there will not be two days in a row on which it is forbidden to prepare food or do the other sorts of work** that are permitted on Yom Tov. Since Yom Kippur is one week and two days after Rosh Hashanah, Rosh Hashanah cannot fall on Wednesday or Friday in order that Yom Kippur not fall on Friday or Sunday. *The second dechiah also prevents Hoshanah Rabbah from falling on Shabbos, in which case we would not be able to perform the custom of Arava and the seven hakofos.* In order to prevent this, Rosh Hashanah is not permitted to fall on Sunday.

Wisdom says we can accept the Jewish calendar, even though we do not need to accept the invalid "postponements" added in reference to Yom Kippur and Hoshana Rabbah. When it comes to making postponements, merely to avoid certain activities on the Sabbath, or to keep Yom Kippur from falling on a Friday, or a Sunday, we can ignore such man-devised rules and keep the days God originally intended. **But that does not mean we must also reject the Jewish calendar completely, going to the opposite extreme!**

The Jewish New Testament Commentary by David Stern (p.179):

"Hoshanah Rabbah was understood to be the absolutely final chance opportunity to have one's sins for the year forgiven ... in Jewish tradition there remained opportunity for forgiveness up to Hoshanah Rabbah."

This seems to portray the final judgment after the millennium and if so, could indicate a shift in understanding by the Jews from the 8th to the 7th day. Was Christ shifting it back John 7?

The Expositor's Commentary of the Bible:

Explanation of John 7:37: “Whether the ‘last day’ of the feast was the seventh or the eighth day is not clear.”

<http://www.everythingjewish.com>:

Hoshana Rabbah: Translated as the *Great Hoshana*, this seventh day of Sukkot **should have been its own festival, but isn't because of the festival day, Shemini Azeret, which follows.** Its two most important rituals include circling the synagogue seven times, instead of once, and beating the willows, or *aravot*. [emphasis mine]

The custom of beating the *aravot* stems from a temple ritual where the willows were struck against the ground near the altar. The custom symbolized a casting away of sins and is the reason that *Hoshana Rabbah* is still known as the final day of judgment, the last moment forgiveness can be attained. Today, the custom, where performed, involves beating willows against the ground. No blessing is recited, as some beat the willows five times and some shake the willows before striking them.

This ritual, which is a rabbinic commandment, was meant to supersede the laws of Shabbat. Rabbis in the fourth century of the Christian Era set the calendar so that *Hoshana Rabbah* would never fall on Shabbat, though Yom Kippur, the most important fast day, could. According to most, *Hoshana Rabbah* marks the conclusion of the High Holiday period in which judgments can still be changed.

One well known custom is staying up the night of *Hoshana Rabbah* to recite and study a text called *tikkun leil hoshana rabbah*. It is believed that at midnight the gates of heaven open to receive prayers.

Shemini Azeret: Immediately following the last day of Sukkot (*Hoshana Rabbah*), is *Shemini Azeret*, the eighth day of Sukkot.

On the eighth day you shall hold a solemn gathering; you shall not work at your occupations. Numbers 29:35

The rabbis interpreted this to mean that G-d asks all those who made a pilgrimage for Sukkot to stay longer, which is a translation for *azeret*, from the root to hold back.

Shemini Azeret is a full festival day, including candle lighting and *kiddush*. Work is prohibited. The *lulav* and *etrog* are not used although *kiddush* is recited in the Sukkah, both evening and morning.

In the synagogue, during the *musaf* service following *shacharit*, the prayer for rain, *tefillat geshem*, is recited. *Shemini Azeret* is also marked by the recital of *yizkor*, the memorial prayer for the dead.

Simchat Torah: The celebration of *Simchat Torah* revolves around the completing and beginning again of the cycle of Torah readings. The completion is marked by seven *hakafot*, circling, similar in form to those of *hoshanot* during Sukkot.

The celebration begins with *ma'ariv*, the evening prayer. A series of verses praising G-d are sung with the congregation chanting responsively.

Children are especially encouraged to participate in the *simchah*, the joy, of the evening. It is custom to hand out flags with apples on top, a symbolic reminder of the tribal flags under which the Israelites marched in the desert.

The morning service has its own *amidah*, silent recitation, and *Hallel*, psalm of praise. Every male in the shul is invited to the *bimah* for an *aliyah*, the blessing before Torah reading. After everyone has received his *aliyah*, there is one last *aliyah* for children. Called *kol ha-ne'arim*, Hebrew for all the boys, every little boy not yet bar-mitzvah, is called to the Torah. A talit is spread over their heads like a canopy and the child says the blessings along with an accompanying adult

The 7th day of Sukkot is called *Hoshana Rabbah* because of the 7 processions formed round the synagogue (*hakafot*) with the *lulav* and *etrog* amidst prayers for deliverance.

In Temple times, the people formed a procession around the altar on each of the first 6 days of Sukkot while chanting: *We implore You, O Hashem, save us!* (Tehillim 118:25). On the 7th day of Sukkot they formed 7 such processions, following which they would beat willow-sprigs against the ground, symbolically casting

off sins as the leaves were beaten off (*Mishnah Sukkah* 4:5-6). For this reason, *Hoshana Rabbah* cannot occur on a Shabbat, for then the willow-sprigs (*hoshanot*) could not be used. The Mishnah designates Hoshana Rabbah as *yom chibbut charayot* (day of striking twigs) and relates: "*They used to bring twigs and strike them against the ground at the sides of the altar*" (*Sukkah* 4:6).

On the night of Hoshana Rabbah, custom is to meet together and read the anthology known as *Tikkun Lel Hoshana Rabbah*, which includes the whole of D'varim and Tehillim, and passages from kabbalistic works. Since the book of D'varim is the last of the Five Books of Moshe, it is read during the night of Hoshana Rabbah because the annual cycle of Torah readings is completed the next day, on *Simchat Torah*.

Hoshana Rabbah (Tishri, 21)

The seventh and last day of Succot. On this day the worshippers go round the bimah of the synagogue seven times while holding the four species. During the **hakkafot** (circuits) **piyyutim** are recited with the refrain Hoshana (Save us, we beseech thee). The name Hoshana Rabbah (the great hoshana) derives from the sevenfold circuit. The source of this custom is in Temple worship. During the festival of Succot, according to tradition, the world is judged for water, and it was the custom to take branches of the willow and go around the alter saying "O Lord, deliver us! O Lord, let us prosper!" (PS. 118:25). Each day the alter would be circled once, and on the seventh day seven times, The custom was then to beat the ground with the willow branch after saying the **hoshanot** prayers.

In the Talmud, Hoshana Rabbah is referred to as a day when everyone comes to the synagogue. Its special character was emphasized during the time of the **geonim**, who saw it as the day in which each human being receives from heaven a note on which his fate is registered. And so there are those who greet each other on this day with the Aramaic blessing **a pitka tava**, or in Yiddish **gut kveitl**. Many and varied liturgical customs have developed for Hoshana Rabbah. The most widespread are the inclusion of the additional Sabbath and festival psalms in the Shaharit (morning) service and the introduction of High Holidays melody and usage for the ritual of taking out the Torah from the ark. Another custom is to remain awake studying Torah throughout the night. This custom was already known in the thirteenth century, and its source is in the need to give additional time to those who had not yet finished reading the Torah and needed to finish by Simhat Torah.

(Tishri, 22)

A festival that falls on the 22nd of Teshri and which coincides with Simhat Torah. "On the eighth day you shall hold a solemn gathering, you shall not work at your occuparions" (Num. 29:35). The holiday is referred to in the Bible as **atzeret**, which means assembly or closing. It is a closing in that it follows the seven days of Succot and closes that holiday and the Tishri holiday season. Thus the name Shemini Atzeret means the closing or assembling of the eighth day, although obligations of Succot are not observed. By rabbinic tradition, Shemini Atzeret celebrates the conclusion of the annual cycle of the reading of the Torah. This celebration is known as Simhat Torah. [In the Diaspora \(exile\) Shemini Atzeret is a two-day festival](#), with the Torah reading concluded on the second day, and it is common to refer to the second day as Simhat Torah and only to the first day as Shemini Atzeret. In Israel, where the festival lasts but one day, the two names are used interchangeably.

[In the Diaspora, a few observances of Succot "spill over" into Shemini Atzeret](#), and according to some customs, the meals on that day are taken in the **succah**, although the benediction recited when eating in the **succah** is omitted. On the other hand, the benediction **She-heheyann**, marking the advent of a new holiday, is recited. In the Diaspora, the ceremony of bidding farewell to the **succah** is performed on the first day of Shemini Atzeret, whereas in Israel it is performed on the seventh and final day of Succot.

Among Sephardi Jews and hasidim in the Diaspora, the procession performed in the synagogues on Simhat Tora and known as **hakkafot** are performed on the first night of Shemini Atzeret as well.

The prayer for rain (Tefillat Geshem) is recited on Shemini Atzeret and from the time of its recitation, the phrase **mashiv ha-ruah u-morid ha-geshem** (He causes the wind to blow and the rain to fall) is inserted in the second benediction of the Amidah. This continues until Passover when the phrase is replaced with **morid ha-tal** (He brings dew). Among Ashkenazi Jews, the memorial prayer, **Yizkov**, is recited on Shemini Atzeret.

Simhat Torah (Rejoicing of the Law) (Tishri, 23)

The celebration which marks the conclusion of the annual cycle of readings of the Torah (**Keri'ar ha-Torah**) in the synagogue. Simhat Torah is a rabbinic institution timed to coincide with the biblical festival Shemini Atzeret, the eighth day of Succot, and which in Eretz Israel lasts but one day. Consequently, in Eretz Israel, Simhat Torah and Shemini Atzeret are in practice one and the same holiday. In the Diaspora (exile), where Shemini Atzeret lasts for two days, each day is popularly known by a different name - the first day as Shemini Atzeret, and the second day, when the reading of the final portion of Deuteronomy is concluded, as Simhat Torah.

In antiquity there were actually two different traditions with regard to the weekly Torah readings. In Eretz Israel, the cycle lasted three years. In the Babylonian tradition, the cycle began on the first Sabbath after the holidays of the month of Tishri. This became the Sabbath of Genesis (Shabbath Bereshit). The cycle was completed a year later on the last of the Tishri holidays, i.e. Shemini Atzeret. In time, all Jewish communities adopted the Babylonian system. The central features of the Simhat Torah celebrations are the **hakkafot** - the perambulations around the synagogue, with the participants carrying the scrolls of the Torah, to the accompaniment of joyous singing and dancing. The **hakkafot** are held both in the **Arvit** and in the **Shaharit** services. After the morning **hakkafot**, three scrolls are taken from the holy ark for the Torah reading service. From the first scroll, the final portion of Deuteronomy is read to conclude the entire Torah; from the second scroll, the first chapter of Genesis with a few additional verses in order to indicate there is no pause in the cycle of the Torah readings; while from the third scroll, the appropriate **maftir** is read relating to the ancient sacrificial service for Shemini Atzeret. According to custom, everyone is called for an **aliyah la-Torah**, and different practices have developed in this connection. In some congregations, the Torah reading is repeated several times in order to accommodate all the worshippers with an **aliyah** in other groups of worshippers ascend together for the reading; while in most non-Orthodox synagogues women worshippers also approach the bimah for the **aliyot**. Because of the emphasis on the Torah as the heritage of every Jew, even young children who have not yet reached Bar Mitzvah age are honored with special **aliyah**. They come up to the bimah accompanied by an adult who leads them in the traditional blessing, as a large **tallit** is held over them. The person honored with the last **aliyah la-Torah** is named Hatan Torah, the Bridegroom of the Law, while the one called for the first **aliyah** of the Genesis portion is named Hatan Bereshit, the Bridegroom of Genesis. In modern Israel, the custom had developed to organize a second **hakkafot** celebration on the night after the conclusion of the festival. These second **hakkafot** have become public celebrations and are frequently held to the accompaniment of joyous orchestral music.

"The season must be fulfilled" according to the prophetic word of Pro & Con # 127. Pentecost is the fulfillment of the Passover Season. Just as the the last Great Day(8th day) of the Feast of Tabernacles is called the Atzeret or conclusion to Tabernacles , likewise the Rabbis consider Pentecost the Atzeret to Passover ,that is the conclusion !

Bible Prophecy Research Jewish Feasts & Festivals Study: Hoshana Rabbah **http://philologos.org/bpr/files/Jewish_Feasts/js004.htm**

Hoshana Rabbah - Last Day of Succoth

(John 7:37) "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

"On the last day of the festival, Hoshana Rabbah, literally, 'on the last day, the great of the festival.' Greek megale ('great') corresponds to Hebrew rabbah. The seventh, last day of Sukkot was its climax. Throughout the seven days of the festival a special cohen [priest] had carried water in a gold pitcher from the Pool of Shiloach (Siloam) to be poured into a basin at the foot of the altar by the cohen hagadol [high-priest]. It symbolized prayer for rain, which begins the next day, on Sh'mini Atzeret; and it also pointed toward the outpouring of the Ruach HaKodesh [Holy Spirit] on the people of Israel. The rabbis associated the custom with Isaiah 12:3, 'With joy shall you draw water from the wells of salvation.' (In a suggestive reflection of how the holiday used to be celebrated, today's Moroccan Jews pour water on each other at Sukkot.) On the seventh day the water pouring was accompanied by cohanim [priests] blowing gold trumpets, L'vi'im [Levites] singing sacred songs, and ordinary people waving their lulavs and chanting the Hallel (Psalms 113-118), which includes in its closing verses:

"Adonai, please save us! [Hebrew Hoshia' na or Hoshana] Adonai, please prosper us! Blessed is he who comes in the name of Adonai! We have blessed you out of the house of Adonai. God is Adonai, and he has given us light." (Psa 118:25-27)

"The words, 'Please save us!' led to the day's being called Hoshana Rabbah, the Great Hosanna. This prayer had Messianic overtones, as is seen from its use when Yeshua made his triumphal entry into Yerushalayim a few days before his execution (Matt 21:9, Mark 11:9-10). It was also a prayer for salvation from sin, for Hoshana Rabbah was understood to be the absolutely final chance to have one's sins for the year forgiven. On Rosh-Hashanah one asks to 'be inscribed in the Book of Life' and on Yom-Kippur one hopes to have the inscription 'sealed'; yet in Jewish tradition there remained opportunity for forgiveness up to Hoshana Rabbah.

"In addition,

"A connection between the possession of the Ruach ha-Kodesh and ecstasy, or religious joy, is found in the ceremony of water drawing, Simchat Beit-HaSho'evah ['feast of water-drawing'], on the festival of Sukkot. The Mishnah said that he who had never seen this ceremony, which was accompanied by dancing, singing and music (Sukkot 5:4), had never seen true joy (Sukkot 5:1). Yet this was also considered a ceremony in which the participants, as it were, drew inspiration from the Holy Spirit itself, which can only be possessed by those whose hearts are full of religious joy (Jerusalem Talmud, Sukkot 5:1, 55a)." (Encyclopedia Judaica 14:365).

"From this passage we also learn that Yeshua and his talmidim [disciples], like other Jews, observed at least portions of the Oral Torah and did not utterly reject it as 'traditions of men'--since the water-drawing ceremony is specified not in the Tanakh but in the Mishna.

"It was in the midst of this water pouring, trumpet blasting, palm waving, psalm chanting and ecstatic joy on the part of people seeking forgiveness--and in the presence of all 24 divisions of the priesthood--that Yeshua cried out in the temple courts, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him keep coming to me and drinking! Whoever trusts in me, as the Tanakh says, rivers of living water will flow from his inmost being!' Comapre Isaiah 44:3, 55:1, 58:11; also the woman at the well, John 4:6-15; and the ultimate fulfillment at Revelation 22:17. In effect Yeshua was declaring, 'I am the answer to your prayers.' His dramatic cry, supported by the full panoply of Temple ritual, was not misunderstood, as vv 40-43 make abundantly clear. His subsequent proclamation, 'I am the light of the world,' also based on the passage of Psalm 118 quoted above, provided an even more agitated reaction (see 8:12 note)."

John 8:12 "Yeshua spoke to them again, still on the last day of Sukkot, Hoshana Rabbah.

"I am the light of the world: whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light which gives life..."

"His remark was specifically suited to the feast of Sukkot; for, according to the Mishna, at the Temple

"there were four golden menorahs with four golden bowls at the top of each, and four ladders each leading to a bowl. Four strong young cohanim would climb up with pitchers each holding 9 liters of oil which they would pour into the bowls. From the worn-out drawers and girdles of the cohanim they made wicks, and with them they lit the menorahs; and there was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that was not lit up by the light of the Beit-HaSho'evah [festivities]. Pious men and men of good deeds would dance around [the menorahs] with lit torches in their hands, singing songs and praises, while the Levites played harps, lyres, cymbals, trumpets and innumerable other musical instruments..." (Sukkah 5:2-4).

"The Gemara on this passage says the menorahs were 75 feet high (Sukkah 52b). Thus, the water-drawing festival was accompanied by bright lights and dancing--for Sukkot is specifically a festival of rejoicing. As before, when the water from Shiloach was being poured and Yeshua used the occasion to invite people to come to him and drink, now he uses the fact that the feast is accompanied by a blaze of light to announce, 'I am the light of the world,' adding a promise with implications for both this life and eternity."

Jewish NT Commentary, David Stern:

"Five days after Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish year, comes Sukkoth, a happy harvest festival that the Bible names the Feast of Booths. It is the Jewish Thanksgiving, celebrated in Israel with renewed importance and joy. Among its many traditions - such as the building of the sukkah, a booth of twigs

decorated with fruit and flowers, is that of Hoshana Rabba, the seventh day of Sukkoth. At midnight, it is said, the skies open, and any wish made then will undoubtedly come true!"

"...the wish associated with this day is the desire or a prayer to be saved."

"Hoshana Rabba is the seventh day of the seventh feast of the Jewish religious calendar. It means the 'Day of Great Salvation' or 'Day of the Great Hosanna.'"

[(Mat 21:8-9) "And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strowed them in the way. {9} And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest."]

(John 12:12-13) "On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, {13} Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord."]

Signs in the Heavens, John A. Abent, pgs 324-325:

Hoshana Rabbah - The seventh day of the festival of Sukkos

Hoshana Rabbah marks the day when the of the day lodgment, which begins on Rosh Hashanah, is sealed. At the beginning of the period of judgment - on Rosh Hashanah and yom kippur - all the world's inhabitants pass in individual review before G-d. During the Festival of Sukkot, the entire world is judged concerning water, fruit, and produce.

The seventh day of the Festival, *Hoshana Rabbah*, is the day that this judgment is sealed. Because human life depends on water and all depends upon the final decision, *Hoshana Rabbah* is invested with a certain similarity to Yom Kippur and is therefore marked by profuse prayer and repentance.

Excerpted from *The Book of Our Heritage*, Feldheim Publications:

Hoshana Rabbah

On each day of the Sukkot festival, after the recitation of *hallel* or after *musaf* - each congregation according to its custom - a Torah scroll is removed from the ark and brought to the *bimah* (where the Torah is read). The *chazan* and congregation say the first four *Hoshanot* responsively. They then circle the *bimah* holding the *lulav* and *esrog* and recite the longer *Hoshana* prayer for the respective day of the Festival, as they appear in the *Siddur*.

These prayers for redemption are referred to as *Hoshanot* because each stanza of the prayer is accompanied by the word *hoshana* - a combination form of the words *hosha* and *na* (bring us salvation, please).

On the first six days of the Festival, the *bimah* is circled once. On *Hoshana Rabbah*, the last day of the Festival, seven circles are made. This custom commemorates the service in the *Bet ha-Mikdash* during which the *kohanim* would circle the altar once daily and seven times on *Hoshana Rabbah*.

Hoshana Rabbah is the last day on which we fulfill the mitzvos of the four species and dwelling in the sukkah (although there are many in the Diaspora who dwell in the sukkah on *Shemini Atzeret* as well). The day is referred to as *Hoshana Rabbah* (literally, the great *Hoshana*) because more *Hoshana* prayers are recited on this day than on the other days.

This day was also known as "the day of the beating of the *aravah*." The Mishnah (*Sukkah* 4:2) records: *How was the mitzvah of aravah fulfilled? There was a place below Jerusalem called Motza. They would go down there and pick branches of willows and would then come and place them alongside the altar with the heads (of the willow branches) bent over the altar. They then sounded the shofar: a tekiah, a teruah, and a tekiah. Each day they would circle the altar once and say, "Ana Hashem Hoshiah Na (Please, G-d, bring us salvation), Ana Hashem Hatzlichah Na (Please, G-d, bring us success)'... On that day (i.e., Hoshana Rabbah) they circled the altar seven times. When they had finished they would say, "Beauty is yours, O altar, beauty is yours." As was done during the week was done on Shabbat (i.e., i f Hoshana Rabbah fell on a*

Shabbat) except (that if it was *Shabbat*) they would gather them (the *aravos*) on the eve (of *Shabbat*) and place them in golden basins so that they would not become wilted.

Why was the rite of the *aravah* prescribed for *Hoshana Rabbah*? *Serer ha-Roke'ach* answers that the reason is that the *aravah* grows near water, and on *Hoshana Rabbah* mankind is judged as regards water.

To commemorate the *hakafot* (the circling) around the altar, we circle around the Torah scroll on the *bimah*, for after the destruction of the *Bet ha-Mikdash* we have nothing left except the Torah and it serves as an altar of atonement. The *Hoshana* service includes prayers that G-d grant us a year of abundant rain and dew.

Although the Torah does not give this day any special status, the people of Israel have traditionally observed many customs that are particular to this day and invest it with an especially solemn character.

There is a custom from the time of the Prophets Chaggai, Zechariah, and Malachi to take an *aravah*, recite a special prayer, and then beat it on the ground. Unlike other Rabbinic obligations, no *berachah* is recited on this practice since it was enacted as a custom rather than as an obligation.

It is customary to stay awake all night on *Hoshana Rabbah* and recite the *tikkun* service, read from the Book of Deuteronomy, recite the entire Book of Psalms, and thus "unite" the night and the day through study and prayer. Those who are especially careful in observing mitzvot immerse themselves in a mikveh before dawn.

Festival clothes are worn, and some have the custom of wearing white clothes as on Yom Kippur, and of lighting the candles which remain from Yom Kippur.

In most Sephardic communities, there is no difference between the text of the prayers on *Hoshana Rabbah* and the other days of *chol ha-mo'ed*. In Ashkenazic communities, there are some minor variations, as appear in the *Siddur*.

After *Hallel* or after *Musaf* (customs differ), the *Hoshana* prayers are recited in the prescribed order, the *bimah* is encircled seven times, and when the section that begins with the words *ta'aneh emunim* is reached, the *esrog* and *lulav* are put aside and the *aravah* is taken.

During the *chazan's* repetition of *Musaf*, the complete *Kedushah* is recited instead of the abbreviated version recited on *chol ha-mo'ed*.

It is customary to eat an especially festive meal. Later in the day, a light snack is eaten and a special blessing is recited after this last act of dwelling in the sukkah.

Festivals of the Jewish Year, by Theodor H. Gaster (New York, 1953):

Also known as the Feast of Booths, Succoth, the Feast of Ingathering, or "the season of our rejoicing," the Feast of Tabernacles begins at the full moon of the seventh month. Like Passover, it is a harvest festival. Just as Passover marks the beginning of the summer dews, Tabernacles begins the season of winter rains. It is the end of the harvest year, harvest home, and the beginning of a new agricultural year.

Booths remind Israel of the time when they wandered through the wilderness on their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land, as well as being reminders of the Temple, as the First and Second Temples were dedicated during the Feast of Booths. Thus, booths are an earthly type of heavenly tabernacles. They are also symbols of God's continuing protection over His people, like a canopy or pavilion. Through Haggai (2:1-9) God reminded Israel on Tishri 21 to get busy and build His house (tabernacle), stop stealing His tithes, and that the latter Temple would have far more glory than the former. We would do well to heed this warning today.

Jews read **Leviticus 22:26 to 23:44; Numbers 29:12-16, and Zechariah 14** on the first and second days of the festival. There is more "Feast of Tabernacles" in **Zechariah 14** than **verses 16-19. Verse 7**, "it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light," emphasizes that although the days are getting shorter (at Feast time) there will come a time when there will be universal twenty-four hour daylight (refer to **Exodus 34:22**; "at the revolution of the year"). **Verse 8** shows the time when there will be living waters in summer and winter. After a long dry summer in Palestine, the winter rains would not come until after Tabernacles. This verse points to the time the whole world will be well watered ("latter rain"). Physically, Tabernacles represents the beginning of the rainy season. This theme is throughout **Zechariah 14, verses 8, 17.**

On the weekly Sabbath during Tabernacles, Jews read **Exodus 33:12** to **34:26** concerning the conclusion of the covenant, and **Ezekiel 38:18** to **39:16**. The latter passage, about the destruction of Gog and Magog, also shows the Tabernacles theme: Gog is judged with torrential rains and fire (showing that God will judge the wicked by fire, as he did in Noah's day by water), **Ezekiel 38:22, 39:6, 39:9. I Kings 8:2-21** (dedication of Solomon's Temple) is also read during Tabernacles.

Last Great Day

The eighth day, "Solemn assembly" or *Azereth*, (Hebrew word meaning "restrain") is an independent festival from Tabernacles. In **Deuteronomy 16:8**, *Azereth* is applied also to the last Day of Unleavened Bread. It does not mean a day of sadness, but a time of reflection at the end of a joyous festival. [The Law is read in a ceremony known as the "Rejoicing in the Law," in which a marriage ceremony is acted out, typifying the marriage of Israel to the Law.](#)

The Jewish Festivals, by Hayyim Schauss (Cincinnati, 1938):

The Feast of Tabernacles known also as the Feast of Ingathering, Feast of Booths, God's Festival, or "The Festival." It is the merriest time of the year, and at no other time of the year did Israelites drink and sing as much as during the fall festival. Sometimes the participants went too far, and Amos, Hosea and Isaiah protested against the bacchanalia of the fall festivals, **Amos 5:21-27; Hosea 9:1; Isaiah 28:7-8**. [But the people, however, paid little attention to their spiritual leaders, and continued to drink and revel at "The Festival."](#)

Tabernacles especially was a festival which involved a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, usually on foot in great caravans or groups of people, banded together to escape robbers (see **Psalm 42:4**). On the way up to Jerusalem, the "Songs of Degrees (ascent), or Steps," **Psalm 120-134**, were sung. **Isaiah 2:2-4, 56:6-7; Zechariah 8:20-23; and Micah 4:1-3** refer to going to Jerusalem to keep the Feast.

Symbols of Tabernacles are the palm branch, *lulov*, the citron, *esrog*, the myrtle, and willow (See **Leviticus 23:40**), which emphasize [the harvest nature of the Feast](#).

A Guide to Succoth, by Rabbi Isaac N. Fabricant (London, 1958):

There is a close tie between the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles. On the former, spiritual union with God is stressed, and in the latter, physical union with God is the highlight. Together these festivals show that God's law is intended to bring about spiritual and physical union with God and the total joy He wants us to have.

The Feast of Tabernacles shows that God wants us to be joyful, but our physical enjoyment must not be allowed to run wild into abandonment or licentiousness, but be controlled (see **Deuteronomy 16:14**).

The Tabernacle (*Succah*)

Jews begin building their booth, or *Succah*, on the evening when Atonement ends. This "temporary residence" reminds man of the frailty of human life and the transience of human existence. **Psalm 49:6, 11-12** shows the result of those people who are misled to trust in their riches: "They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches . . . Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations . . . Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish."

A *Succah* must have plenty of shade, for the word itself is derived from a verb which means "to cover," but enough uncovered to see the stars. Living in the shade signifies confidence in God's protection, with God a pavilion of protection over us (see **Psalm 17:8**). Shadows also typify the transitory nature of man's life (see **Psalm 144:4**). A devout Jew utters the following prayer upon entering the *Succah* on the first night of the Festival: "May it be your will, O my God and the God of my fathers, that you may cause your divine presence to dwell amongst us and may you spread the Tabernacle of your peace over us."

The Four Plants

Leviticus 23:40 states: "And ye shall take you on the first day (1) the boughs of goodly trees, (2) branches of palm trees, and (3) boughs of thick trees, and (4) willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days."

Josephus (*Antiquities*) notes that in his day Jews carried branches of myrtle, willows, palm trees and a citron, and waved these during the offering of sacrifices in the Temple with the singing of the Hallel (**Psalms 120-134**). The palm tree is an Eastern symbol of majesty, and the citron or *ethrog*, of beauty.

These four plants are of differing qualities and are likened to different parts of the body in Jewish literature: the palm, a man's spine; the myrtle branch, his eyes; the willow, his lips; and the citron, his heart. Thus all parts of the body -- God's people -- must be *united* in dedicated service to God: **Psalm 35:10**, "All my bones [limbs' in Jewish translation] shall say, LORD, who is like unto you"

The "hoshanahs" which Jews sing during Tabernacles in connection with waving the four plants are reminiscent of the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem (see **Matthew 21:8-9**).

Simhath Torah

The 8th Day is the joyous Climax of the Feast, a time when according to a custom originating in the Babylonian Captivity, **the Torah (Book of the Law) is completed after having been read publicly for a year**. Thus Jews refer to the Last Great Day as "the Day of the Book" [see **Revelation 20:12**] or "the day of completion" [of God's plan]. It is a day of *completion and recommencement*.

The reader of the last verses of Deuteronomy is referred to as the "bridegroom of the Law (which is likened to the bride)," and the Last Great Day is *likened to a marriage feast*.

There is the custom of the blessing of the children on this day, with an adult leading children in reading **Genesis 48:16** of Jacob's blessing on Ephraim and Manasseh [compare with the Church of God practice].

Pre-Mosaic Festival?

The Book of Jubilees (composed c. 130 B.C.) states that Abraham was the founder of the custom of the Festival of Succoth. When he came to live in Beersheba, he set up his tents and began a ceremony centered around these tents. "And Abraham built Succoth for himself and his servants in the seventh month, and he was the first to celebrate the festival of Succoth in the Holy Land," (**Jubilees 16:26**). Thus, Abraham's practice was said to be the inspiration for the Feast of Tabernacles. [See **Hebrews 11:8-9**, "By faith Abraham . . . sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise."]

Genesis 33:16-17 states "So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir [a rough mountain in Idumaea, similar to the word *sair*, "goat, or devil"]. And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him an house, and made booths for his cattle: therefore the name of the place is called Succoth [booths]." A Jewish legend holds that Esau represents sin and temptation and Seir stands for goat on the Day of Atonement. When Seir departed, that is, after the Day of Atonement, Jacob came to Succoth to observe the Feast of Tabernacles.

The Jewish Festivals, by L.M. Lehrman (London, 1956):

A famous Rabbi said, "He who despises the festivals has no claim to share in the world to come."

Tabernacles, the most joyous festival, depicts the time Israel marched from Egypt to Mount Sinai and into the wilderness, finally arriving in the Promised Land. Yet the Feast is not celebrated in the time of the Exodus (Nisan, when the weather is mild), but in Tishri, when cold winds begin to blow and drizzling rains begins. To dwell in booths in the spring is no trial of man's faith, but in the fall it means hardship and inconvenience, which shows that hardship is no excuse for lack of faith. Thus the booth is a symbol that we have faith in *God* as our protector.

The booth is also representative of joyous hospitality. Tradition assigns to each of the seven days of the Feast the visit of a figurative guest: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, and David.

During Passover, unleavened bread is required to be eaten only on the first night of the seven days of Unleavened bread, providing no *leavened* bread is eaten. But **dwelling in booths is obligatory for seven full days**.

During the first seven days of the Feast, 70 bullocks were sacrificed, which the Talmud interprets this as representing the "70 nations of the world" -- Gentiles. Thus the Feast of Tabernacles emphasizes Gentiles, while the Last Great Day, a special festival of its own, "Israel's *own* festival," in which only one bullock was brought to represent Israel alone.

The Cycle of the Jewish Year, by Yaacov Vainstein (Jerusalem, 1964):

The "Ceremony of Water Drawing" on the close of the first day of the Feast, the Levites, amidst a brilliantly lit court and the sound of harps, lyres, cymbals, trumpets, and other musical instruments and singing, walked up the 15 steps that lead from the Court of the men to that of the Women, corresponding to the 15 "songs of degrees," **Psalms 120-134**. At each step they paused while one of these songs of Degrees was chanted with great enthusiasm. At the Upper Gate, stood two priests, who sounded the Shofar as the singers ascended each step.

The vast congregation was tremendously enthralled as these Psalms were chanted. When the procession reached the eastern gate of the city, they turned to the West, facing the Temple, and proclaimed: "In the days of the First Temple, our fathers who were in this place turned their faces towards the east and worshipped the sun [**Ezekiel 8**] but as for us, our eyes are turned to the Lord."

At daybreak, the procession left the Temple and proceeded to the Pool of Siloam in a triumphal march. From it, they brought back water to the Temple, which they poured upon the altar along with a libation of wine. This custom, which lasted for six nights, has an obvious connection with the season (which was the beginning of the "latter rains" of the fall). On the eighth day was a special prayer for rain. [In **John 7:37-39**, Christ on the Last Day referred directly to the ceremony of water drawing.]

The Temple, by Alfred Edersheim (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1950):

The most joyous of all festival seasons, the Feast of Tabernacles came at the time of the year when all crops had been stored, all fruits gathered, wine made, and the land only awaited the "latter rain" to prepare it for a new crop. The fall harvest reminded Israel (1) of their dwelling in booths in the wilderness and (2) the final harvest when Israel's mission should be completed, and all nations gathered unto God.

Three things especially marked the Feast of Tabernacles: (1) *Joyous festivities*, with sharing meals with the poor strangers, Levites and homeless; (2) *dwelling in booths* to remind Israel they were "strangers and pilgrims in the earth." The Sadducees understood the "four plants" of **Leviticus 23:40, 43** to refer to the materials in which the booths were to be constructed, whereas Pharisees applied it to what the worshipers were to carry in their hands. The latter was the universal practice at the time of Christ; (3) *special sacrificial offerings*.

Three things are worthy of note about the special burnt offerings:

1. They are the characteristic sacrifice of the Feast. Twice the number of rams and lambs are sacrificed at Tabernacles than Unleavened Bread, and five times the number of bullocks.
2. The number of burnt sacrifices, whether taking each kind by itself or all together, is always divisible by the sacred number seven. The number seven is more prominent during this Feast, including the fact that the Feast begins when the seventh moon is full.
3. [The daily reduction of the number of bullocks offered. This may show the decreasing sanctity of each successive day of the Feast \(common explanation\) or that the reason for this is that the bullocks add up to 70, representing the nations of the world \(70 Gentile nations\), while the one bullock offered on the 8th day represents Israel \(Talmud explanation\).](#)

Feast of Tabernacles in the Talmud

Jewish Rabbis believe that Sukkot designates the end of the passage of time. That is why they sometimes refer to it as "The Festival of the Future." The mood of the Feast of Tabernacles is totally different than the time of solemn introspection on Trumpets and Atonement. It is a time to be joyful. Some people call the Tabernacles "the Jewish Thanksgiving." A sukkoth emphasizes God's divine protection, that God provides for us supernaturally.

The Hebrew word "Atzeret" may be translated "solemn assembly," "keeping back," "Shutting off" and is the same as "Atzirah." On Shemini Atzeret God says "Ye shall have a shutting off," **Numbers 29:35**, but Pesach God says, "Shall be a shutting off to the Lord," **Deuteronomy 16:8**. Why these different expressions? God says to Israel, "On Pesach shut Me off from giving rain unto Israel, but on Shemini Atzeret I shall shut you off, by My rains, from walking in My outdoors." [Rain is injurious after Pesach in Palestine, see **I Samuel 12:17**]. --**Yalkut Hadash, 188b**

Said Rabbi Levi: "He who observes the precept of the Sukkan in this world will be rescued by God from all loss and damage."

Otzar Midrashim, page 493:

Just as one cannot fulfill his duty on Sukkot unless all four Minim [elements] are held together, by the same token Israel cannot be redeemed unless all Israelites hold together. --**Yalkut, 188a**

Leviticus 23:40, "And ye shall take unto yourselves on the first day, the fruit of the tree Hadar, branches of palm-trees, and the boughs of the myrtle tree, and willows of the brook." The palm branch is like the spine, myrtle like the eye, willow like the mouth, Etrog like the heart. With all your limbs praise God. --**Yalkut, 188b**

It is a custom to draw water at Feast of Tabernacles, representing drawing of Holy Spirit, **Isaiah 12:3**. Offering of Bulls on Sukkot: 13 offered the first day, then 12, 11, 10, 9, 8, 7, for a total of 70. But on Shemini Atzeret, only one bull sacrificed. Seventy were said to atone for the seventy Gentile nations, and the one for Israel. Thus Shemini Atzeret is an intimate feast for Israel only. --**Pesikta Buber, page 193, Zohar, iv., 476**

Sukkot is a type: you reap and gather produce, so will you enjoy reward in the World-to-come when you reap what you have sown in this life. --**Mikrae Kodesh, page 109**

Sukkot is especially a time of rejoicing. Scripture enjoins us to rejoice three times; on Shabuot only once, on Pesach not once. On Pesach, neither wheat nor fruit ripe, we know not how harvest will transpire. On Shabuot, wheat has been harvested, but not fruit nor increase in flocks. But on Sukkot, everything has been gathered. --**Yalkut Shirmeoni to Emos, 23**

Israel was freed on Pesach, "the season of our freedom," but was not united with their father; that was at Sukkot, "the season of our rejoicing." To demonstrate his feeling of freedom, he lives in flimsy hut, not in a stockade or a fortified camp. --**Mikrae Kodesh, 151-2**

God says to Israel: "My sons, reside in the Sukkan for seven days so that ye may remember the miracles, which I did for you in the desert." --**Yalkut Emor, Pesikta Buber, page 189a**

Feast of Tabernacles: Dwelling with God. Why Are We to Dwell in Booths?

Leviticus 23:41-44 says that *all* Israelites shall dwell in booths. Its purpose is to teach us that God made children of Israel to dwell in booths when He brought them out of Egypt.

Why did God make Israel to dwell in tents? To make them realize that they were not yet dwelling with God, that they had sinned, and that God does not dwell with sin, **Exodus 33:1-11**. The tabernacle of the congregation was without the camp. Sin separated Israel from the Holy of Holies, **Hebrews 9:1-12**.

We dwell in tabernacles to remind us that we are not yet as close to God as we should be. Tabernacles are humble abodes, not palaces.

Hebrews 11, shows that dwelling in tabernacles in humble obedience to God means we are desiring the Holy City, that we are faithfully waiting for it.

Will God Dwell With Us?

Revelation 21:1-7, God's tabernacle will come to this earth, He will dwell with us.

Matthew 16:24, 17:1-13, ". . . it is good for us to be here."

Psalms 122:1, I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the LORD.

Isaiah 2:2-5, Let us go to God's house, joyfully, to learn His ways, be taught to walk in His paths.

Is Israel Inclined to Dwell in Tabernacles?

Nehemiah 8:1-18 shows that Israel hadn't dwelt in booths since the days of Joshua! Not even David, Solomon, Asa, Josiah, Hezekiah had done so.

Haggai 1:1-11 shows that everyone was concerned with living in a ceiled house, there was little concern for God's House.

Hosea 12:8-9 is a prophecy. Rich people of Israel today live in fine houses. God will have to *make* them dwell in tabernacles.

Look Forward to Dwelling in God's Tabernacle!

Truth leads us to God's tabernacles, **Psalm 43:1-5**. It is our *refuge*, **Psalm 46:1-11**.

We *long* to dwell in God's tabernacles, **Psalm 84:1-12**; Full of rejoicing and salvation, **Psalm 118:14-15**. Let's forget about *our* houses, but instead, work to build *God's* house, **Psalm 132:1-7, 13-14**.

How to Make The Feast More Valuable

1. Get into the Feast of Tabernacles Attitude.

The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the Millennium -- so everything we do during the Feast is important. Put your mind, heart, taste buds, and body into action and enjoy a taste of the coming one thousand years of peace. This is the Feast of Ingathering -- a time of harvest when God will bring together His People (**Leviticus 23:39**).

2. Rejoice With Purpose.

We are God's Firstfruits, and we should rejoice during the Festival and enjoy the good things (**Deuteronomy 14:26**). When we eat a nice meal, we should know why we have it and who gave it to us (**Isaiah 25:6**). Don't let the mundane and minor things crowd out the real meaning of the Feast. Be sensitive to the needs of the brethren, and give help wherever you see it is needed.

3. Plan to Endure any Inconvenience, as a True Christian Should.

If you can *do well* during the Feast when wronged, you will learn to be patient with those you must deal with in the millennium (and in everyday life). We must make sure not to offend any of our brethren, especially any "little ones" (**Matthew 18:6**) during the Feast (or any other time). Let us rejoice and be content (**Philippians 4:10-11**), and be positive (**verse 8**).

4. Let Your Light Shine.

Purposely plan to let your light shine during this Feast. Although the gospel can be preached (**Matthew 24:14**) or published (**Mark 13:10**), it can also be demonstrated by our example radiating God's Holy Spirit (**Matthew 5:16**). We should witness that our God exists (**Isaiah 43:10**), and we, His People should set the example by following Christ's precedent.

5. Get to Know and Love Your Brethren.

If you can't love your brother, how can you love God? (**John 15:9-13**). It is a joy to love and serve (**verse 11**), laying down your life as a living sacrifice (**verse 13**). Go out of your way to meet new people, this could make a big difference to someone.

6. Plan to Learn from Sermons.

Profit from this spiritual feast by listening closely to the sermons, taking adequate notes, and praying for the diligence to follow through and study the subject matter. Prove to yourself from your Bible that the message presented is true.

7. Make This Feast a Turning Point.

If we overcome, we will be pillars in the Kingdom of God (**Revelation 3:12**). Resolve to get rid of that *one big problem* you have. If your mind has a wrong attitude get rid of that attitude (**Matthew 18:15**). If you have a serious "problem" with a brother, go to that person and clear things up (**Matthew 18:15**).

Make this Feast an important one! written by Gary Sjoldal:

Feast of Tabernacles and the Millennium

After Christ's triumphant return to this earth, and after the release of the captives on the beginning of the Jubilee year, one of the most wonderful events in the history of the earth will occur: the Kingdom of God will be set up on this earth and a thousand-year time of true peace and prosperity will begin.

This is the Millennium, the word taken from the Greek language meaning "1,000."

No More War

How wonderful the reign of Christ will be during the Millennium. There will be peace because all nations will "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks [scythes]: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation neither shall they learn war any more," **Micah 4:3**.

There will be no more wasted lives due to war, and the corollaries of war: death, mutilation, deadly chemicals, mental problems, venereal disease, drugs, broken homes, heartache. And even more, there will be no wasting of finances and resources used to kill and maim and cause destruction; rather, there will be positive spending of money to help and heal and promote construction.

Wild Animals Tamed

Not only will people not kill each other in the Millennium, but the nature of animals will be changed so that a lamb and a lion can be together, and a small child can play with all animals without being hurt, **Isaiah 11:6-8**. This world will be restored to the condition it existed at the time of the Garden of Eden.

There shall no longer be hurt in the Kingdom of God, "for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," **verse 9**.

Peaceful Lives

Rather than today's rat race, pollution, crime, violence, and drugs, people will live God's way: "They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree [God approves of private ownership]; and none shall make them afraid . . . all people will walk everyone in the name of . . . the Lord our God for ever and ever," **Micah 4:4-5**.

Right Government

Who will rule us in the Millennium? "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them . . . and they lived and REIGNED WITH CHRIST A THOUSAND YEARS," **Revelation 20:4**.

"And THE KINGDOM and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom . . . shall be given to the people of the SAINTS of the Most High," **Daniel 7:27**.

"He that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron," **Revelation 2:26-27**.

And the twelve apostles "shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel," **Matthew 19:28**. These tribes are the descendants of ancient Israel: United States, Canada, Great Britain, Europe, Scandinavia, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa.

Christ will be the King of the Kingdom of God. He is "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS . . . He shall rule them [the nations] with a rod of iron," **Revelation 19:16, 15**.

Those in the first resurrection are very blessed for "they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall REIGN WITH HIM A THOUSAND YEARS," **Revelation 20:6**.

Fall Feast

There is a saying in our hedonistic society: "Let's Party!" But, there is a better saying: "Let's go to the Feast!" This feast always refers to the Festival of Tabernacles (7 days) followed by the Eighth Day (1 day). The Feast of Tabernacles today is generally observed away from where one normally lives -- away from the stress and anxieties of business, away from the daily routine at home and work, away from noise pollution and traffic jams. It is held in an area where peace, happiness, and harmony prevail -- where fellowship, learning, and spiritually maturity can be achieved.

Temporary Dwellings

The temporary dwellings or booths of the ancient Israelites were built of interwoven branches and boughs. This kind of shelter brought the realization, remembrance and thanksgiving that God was their protector, guide and deliverer, the One who brought them out of Egypt (sin), bondage and oppression, to a physical type of salvation which looked forward to the thousand-year reign of Christ in the Kingdom of God.

Today we can also be thankful and rejoice that we have been delivered from the bondage of sin and death, and are looking forward to the Millennium rest and to spiritual salvation. As we keep the Feast of Tabernacles, the Holy Spirit of God the Father, and Jesus Christ, dwells in us and we dwell with them. This is a far greater and enduring experience than just living for today in a booth of branches and boughs.

The Festival of Tabernacles reminds us that living in temporary dwellings, whether our homes or our own bodies, foreshadows permanent residence and a glorious, immortal body in the Kingdom of God.

The Eighth Day Festival written by: Gary Sjoldal:

A popular belief is that you can only be saved if you hear the name of Jesus Christ. A number of religions have sent missionaries to the Orient, Africa, and various remote places in order to make sure that the "name of Christ" is heard so that the hearer can be saved.

Flat Tire

But, what about the proverbial flat tire on the missionary's car? He fails to reach a certain person who then dies not having heard the name of Christ. Is this poor unfortunate person doomed to hell for all eternity because of a flat tire? Is this how God works?

Or, is God's power beyond the technical limitations that constrain religionists in their quest to save those God probably hasn't even called as yet? What is God's approach to reaching people in order to offer them their chance for salvation?

What about all your friends and relatives who never really knew the truth of God, some of whom may have been bad persons, drug users, criminals, atheists, etc.

Ancient Israel

Early in God's Plan we find Him choosing a special group of people -- the twelve tribes of Israel. These and only these were His Chosen People in the Old Testament. Israel was to be a model nation and people, an example to the rest of the world. Any "strangers" who came into contact with Israel could become Israelites if they would follow the God of Israel, then becoming a part of God's People.

Ancient Israel disobeyed God and failed to keep the Old Covenant, **Exodus 19:5-6**. But, God said He would make a *New* Covenant with New Testament Israel, **Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:8-11**.

Israel in Christ's Time

In early New Testament times, Jesus Christ told the twelve apostles to go first to Israel, **Matthew 10:6**, and that they would not have gone over the lands of Israel till He was to come again -- sometime in the near future, **verse 23**. Later, the apostles also went to the Gentiles, but the emphasis was still on Israel. And now Israel was under the New Covenant since God's Holy Spirit was generally available.

God's Chosen People in New Testament times, as well as today, are those whom He calls regardless of whether they are descendants of physical Israel or not, **John 6:44**. And in fact those who are Christ's become spiritual Israelites, **Galatians 3:29**.

Modern Israel

Those people God calls today can accept the call, and eventually become a part of God's True Church by receiving God's Holy Spirit, **Romans 8:9**.

Most of the modern physical descendants of Israel (the Caucasian peoples of the United States, Great Britain, etc.) have turned their backs on God and have ceased to be Model Nations. They will be punished severely, but will eventually be regathered during the Jubilee year after Christ's return to become a righteous people as an example for the rest of the nations of the world.

The Future

But, what about non-Israelites of the past, or Israelites who never even heard the name of Christ? What about the "lost"?

This is the point of the final festival in God's seven-part Plan. This festival represents the time when God will make salvation available to all those who never had a previous chance to choose it.

Great White Throne Judgment

The seventh festival is often called the White Throne Judgment. "And I saw a GREAT WHITE THRONE . . . and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life: and the DEAD WERE JUDGED out of those things which were written in the books, ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS," **Revelation 20:11-12**.

This judgment occurs at the end of the thousand-year Millennium period: ". . . they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished," **Revelation 20:4-5**.

First Resurrection

When Christ returns there will occur what may be called the First Resurrection. Those who will live and reign with Jesus Christ for one thousand years must first be resurrected:

"This is the FIRST RESURRECTION. Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power . . .," **Revelation 20:5-6**.

Second Resurrection

The resurrection back to physical human life of all the dead who never had an opportunity for salvation will occur after the Millennium. This is the SECOND RESURRECTION which will be followed by the Great White Throne Judgment.

The Eighth Day Festival shows a time of New Beginning for those who accept salvation (God's way of life) when they are given their chance for understanding. Eight is the number of new beginnings. What a wonderful time of opportunity that will be!

Hoshana Rabbah (<http://tckillian.com>) by Greg Killian:

Hoshana Rabbah is the Hebrew name given to the last and greatest day of Hag HaSuccoth, the Feast of Tabernacles. **Hoshana Rabbah** is the seventh Chol HaMoed (the Intermediate days) of Hag HaSuccoth, which is the day before Shmini Atzeret. Named for the fact that more hoshanot are said on this day than all the previous days of the festival. This day marks the culmination of this incredible part of the year which began with Rosh Hashana (Yom Teruah1).

Although **Hoshana Rabbah** was not accorded any different status by the Torah than the other days of Chol HaMoed (the intermediate days), the Jewish people have observe many customs on this day and have invested it with a solemn character. For example, the white parochet, curtain on the ark, in shul remains up until after **Hoshana Rabbah**.

On **Hoshana Rabbah** afternoon we bring our "keilim" (vessels) FROM the succah back INTO the house – in preparation for Shmini Atzeret. This may highlight the primary purpose of this Yom Tov, i.e. to move the spiritual message of the succah into our homes for the remainder of the year.

The Zohar (Tzav 31b) describes **Hoshana Rabbah** as a judgment day akin to Yom HaKippurim (Yom Kippur2), for on **Hoshana Rabbah** the parchments containing the Yom HaKippurim decrees are made final.3 **Hoshana Rabbah** assumes special importance as a day of prayer and repentance. On Rosh Hashanah all people were judged. The righteous were given a favorable judgment, those found wanting, but not totally evil, were given until Yom HaKippurim to repent. If they failed to do so, the verdict against them was written and sealed, but not yet 'delivered'. That was not done until **Hoshana Rabbah**, a day when Jews assemble in prayer, dedication, and supplication. The joy of Succoth reaches its climax not in revelry but in devotion. In mercy, God finds ample reason to tear up the parchments bearing harsher sentences, as it were, and replace them with brighter tidings. The following chart illustrates this relationship:

Rosh Hashana	Yom HaKippurim	Hoshana Rabbah
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Judgment Day – The judgment is rendered.	The judgment is sealed.	The judgment is delivered.
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The morning following **Hoshana Rabbah** is when the judgment that was delivered, begins to be manifest to the world.

The Aravah (willow)⁴

On **Hoshana Rabbah** we take the willow (hoshana-arava) branch, which only grows near water, as a symbol of rejuvenation and re-awakening through rain and redemption.

The Four Species of Succoth must be tied together in a bond, what the Talmud in Sukkah (34b) similarly calls an 'agudah achat.' The palm frond, the myrtle and the willow are tied together and held in the right hand, with the etrog held in the left and with all four brought together when we make the blessing, as well as whenever we participate in the wavings during Hallel. Everyone is familiar with the classic Midrash that compares the qualities of the Four Species, (taste and smell), to the qualities of four types of Jews. The etrog is blessed with a good smell and good taste, like those Sages blessed with Torah and good deeds. The palm frond is blessed with good taste (dates) but no scent to speak of, like those Sages who have Torah but lack good deeds. The myrtle has an exquisite scent, but provides no fruit, and so too there are many Jews whose good deeds can be detected from a distance (like smell), but alas they fall short in Torah knowledge. And finally we have the willow, no taste and no smell, which is compared to the Jew who has neither Torah nor good deeds to his credit.

And yet the moral message of the 'agudah achat' (one bundle, group, society, amalgamation) in the Talmud, and which is codified in the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim, Section 651), is that just as the mitzvah of the Four Species requires four different kinds of vegetation, so too we need all four different kinds of Jews, covering the entire range of people. Whoever thinks that we can ignore those Jews devoid of Torah and good deeds is wrong! Lacking the aravah, the willow branch, makes the entire 'agudah' worthless. We haven't fulfilled the commandment until we have all 'four species.'

The significance of the willow branch on **Hoshana Rabbah** is not only that without it the other three species are in serious trouble; the truth is that the entire focus of **Hoshana Rabbah** is exclusively on the willow branch, and our striking it upon the earth. What is the significance of this strange thud?

Kabbalistically, the striking of the aravah against the earth symbolizes the confrontation between the 'chesed' (a loving-kindness) symbolized by the aravah, which grows along the river's edge (and water is the consummate symbol of loving-kindness), and the earth, which symbolizes 'din,' strict justice, exact measures that which places limits on the water flow. Our intent is not merely to act out our prayer for rain, our desire for many willows to be able to grow. The Kabbalistic significance of this rite is our expression of the mastery of the willow over the earth, of G-d's loving-kindness over His strict justice because only on the basis of loving-kindness will redemption arrive. At moments like this, the 'aravah' or willow is the witness that can sway G-d's gaze. If we want G-d's benevolence, His only question is how have we acted toward the 'aravot' (the willow branches) of His world, how have we treated the Jew who lacks both Torah and good deeds? It's easy to honor a great sage or a benefactor, but how many of us know how to honor those that no one else honors, the forgotten 'willows.'

On Simchat Torah we dance with the Torah and dancing is something every Jew can learn how to do, the etrog Jew, the lulav Jew, the hadas Jew and even the aravah Jew. The Midrash teaches: "The commandments were only given in order to unite all of the creatures [Midrash Tanchuma, Parashat Shemini 8]." When we learn the importance of the unified bond of Israel, when we utilize the willow-aravah Jew to express Divine loving-kindness, then our Torah will no longer divide but will begin to unify, and we will truly be on the road to purification and redemption.

Five of the twenty-two letters of the Alef-beit have two forms: bent and straight. They are the letters: mem, nun, tzadi, peh, and kof. Their straight form are usually called 'sofit', concluding letters, because they are at the end of a word. Since these letters are in a sense restraining forces which force a halt in speaking, they are called 'strict powers'. These letters are the 'vessels', within which are contained that minute portion of God's infinite being which can be conceived by finite people (Tanya 2:4).

On **Hoshana Rabbah**, towards the end of the Shacharit (morning) service, we beat the willow branches five times on the floor. The five-time beating of the willow branches symbolizes the breaking of the five vessels

which restrain. The revelation of the full force of holiness. The beating of the branches thus causes a 'sweetening' of the strict powers.⁵

"The practice of taking willow twigs on Hoshanah Rabbah was instituted in remembrance of the Temple observance. An interesting interpretation of the practice of beating the willow-bundle [some wave the bundle, some beat it on the ground, a utensil, or a piece of furniture two or three times; some wave and beat the bundle] is given by R' Zemach Gaon: The leaves of the willow are shaped like the lips and these twigs have the purpose of atoning for the sins of the lips. We beat them on the earth to symbolize our resolution that from now on we will not sin with our lips again. R' Zemach cites a second interpretation: During the preceding holidays - Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur - Satan incites God's Attributes of Judgment against Israel. But now, after we have accumulated many mitzvahs, we are confident that no one's lips, not even Satan's, can harm us. So we beat the symbolic lips - the willow - to the earth."

No blessing is recited over the beating of the aravah since it was merely a custom.

In Temple times, branches of willows were struck against the ground near the altar. This ritual may symbolize a casting away of sins and is the reason that **Hoshana Rabbah** is still known as the final day of judgment.

This ritual is extremely important, so much so that the Sages held that it superceded the laws of Shabbat:

Talmud - Mas. Sukkah 43b He raised an objection against him: The rite of the lulab overrides the Sabbath on the first day,⁶ and that of the willow-branch on the last day.⁷ On one occasion the seventh day of the [ceremonial of the] willow-branch fell on a Sabbath, and they brought saplings of willows on the Sabbath eve and placed them in the courtyard of the Temple. The Boethusians,⁸ having discovered them, took and hid them under some stones.⁹ On the morrow some of the 'amme ha-arez¹⁰ discovered them and removed them from under the stones, and the priests brought them in and fixed them in the sides of the altar. [The reason for hiding the willows was that] the Boethusians do not admit that the beating of the willow-branch¹¹ overrides the Sabbath.¹² Thus¹³ we see clearly that [the performance of the willow ceremonial is] in the taking of it?¹⁴ — This is a refutation. Then why should it¹⁵ not override [the Sabbath]?¹⁶ — Since with us¹⁷ it does not override [the Sabbath]¹⁸ it does not override it with them¹⁹ either.²⁰

With the fixing of the calendar, the Sages have ensured that **Hoshana Rabbah** will never fall on the Sabbath.

Customs

It is traditional to wear your good clothes on **Hoshana Rabbah**. This is the only time Hasidim do so other than on Yom Tov or Shabbat.

Among some people, a festive meal customarily follows the morning service. The meal features Challah dipped in honey, nuts, kreplachs (symbolizing the covering of severity with loving-kindness) with meat, and carrots cut into rings (the shape being a sign of wealth). This festive meal is eaten in the succah.

People wish each other 'pikta tava' (Aramaic), literally "a good note", but meaning a good writ of judgment. This is based on the Zohar (Tsav 31b): "The seventh day of the festival is the close of the judgment of the world, and writs of judgment issue from the Sovereign."

The afternoon of **Hoshana Rabbah** is the winding down of Hag HaSuccoth. Some people visit the succah one last time and recite the following prayer: "May it be that we merit to dwell in the succah made of Leviathan":

Talmud - Mas. Baba Bathra 75a Rabbah in the name of R. Johanan further stated: The Holy One, blessed be He, will in time to come make a tabernacle for the righteous from the skin of Leviathan; for it is said: Canst thou fill tabernacles with his skin. If a man is worthy, a tabernacle is made for him; if he is not worthy [of this] a [mere] covering is made for him, for it is said: And his head with a fish covering. If a man is [sufficiently] worthy a covering²¹ is made for him; if he is not worthy [even of this], a necklace is made for him, for it is said: And necklaces about thy neck.²² If he is worthy [of it] a necklace is made for him; if he is not worthy [even of this] an amulet is made for him; as it is said: And thou wilt bind him for thy maidens.²³ The rest [of Leviathan] will be spread by the Holy One, blessed be He, upon the walls of Jerusalem, and its splendour will shine from one end of the world to the other; as it is said: And nations shall walk at thy light, and kings at the brightness of thy rising.²⁴

Work Restrictions: Non-essential work activities or crafts prohibited.

Synagogue Customs

Various customs have arisen owing to the day's status as a time of Divine Judgment.

1. Extra lights are lit in the synagogue.
2. It is customary to remain awake and spend the entire night of **Hoshana Rabbah** reading from the Torah and Tehillim (Psalms). The particular order to be followed is printed in a special volume called Tikkun Leil **Hoshana Rabbah**.
3. In some congregations, Mishneh Torah, i.e. the entire book of Deuteronomy, is read from a Torah scroll. (No blessing is recited over this reading.)
4. In some congregations, the entire Book of Tehillim, the book of Psalms, is recited communally. A gartl is worn for the reading of the entire Book of Tehillim after midnight on **Hoshana Rabbah**. This reading is customarily not lengthy.
5. At the completion of each of the [five] sefarim of the Book of Tehillim, one reads the brief prayer (beginning Yehi Ratzon)²⁵ which is read on **Hoshana Rabbah**, as well as the similar prayer which is read after the moon has risen,²⁶ but not the prayer²⁷ which is said on Yom-Tov.²⁸
6. On [the morning of] **Hoshana Rabbah**, before Hallel²⁹, one removes the two upper rings that are bound around the lulav alone, leaving only the three rings which join it with the hadassim and the aravos.

During Each day of Hag HaSuccoth, the Feast of Tabernacles, we circle the bimah with the lulav and etrog while reciting the hashana prayers. On **Hoshana Rabbah**, the seventh day of Hag HaSuccoth, we circle the bimah seven times. As we mentioned earlier, we also beat the willow branches at the end of the shacharit service.

These processions commemorate similar processions around the alter of the Temple in Jerusalem. The processions are known as Hoshanot, because while the procession is made, we recite a prayer with the refrain, "Hosha na!" (help us, we pray!). On the seventh day of Succot, seven circuits are made. For this reason, the seventh day of Succoth is known as Hoshanah Rabbah (the great Hoshanah).

The hoshanot ("help us, we pray") are performed like those of the other days of Hag HaSuccoth except that many or all of the Torah scrolls are removed from the ark. One tradition is to take out seven Torah scrolls and return one to the ark with each circuit. Another custom is to carry a separate bunch of willows that will be beaten on the floor. A less common practice is the blowing of the shofar at the end of each circuit.

In keeping with the penitential undertone of the day, in some synagogues the leader of the service wears a kittel as on Rosh Hashana and Yom HaKippurim. The service itself differs in that the psalms said only on Shabbat and Yom Tov are added by the Ashkenazim to the introductory portion of the service. Also, the melodies of Yom Tov are used for parts of the service.

Torah Readings

Hoshana Rabbah – The Day of the Great Hoshana

Torah:	Bemidbar (Numbers) 29:26-34
Nazarean Codicil:	Marqos (Mark) 11:1-11, Revelation 3:14-22

Torah Reading:

- Reader 1 – Bemidbar 29:26-28
- Reader 2 – Bemidbar 29:29-31
- Reader 3 – Bemidbar 29:32-34
- Reader 4 – Bemidbar 29:29-34

Hoshana Rabbah Events

The following events occurred on **Hoshana Rabbah**:

Hoshanah Rabbah - the Great Rejoicing. The last and greatest day of the feast. Gateway to Judaism Pg.342

A burnt offering of seven young bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. Numbers 29:32

Ritual of the water libation is performed. day 7. Sukkah 42b

Zerubbabel is strengthened and told that a future temple would be greater than Solomon's temple. Haggai 2:1-9

Yeshua invites the thirsty to drink living water. Note the "last and greatest day" in John 7:37.

John 7:1-44 After this, Jesus went around in Galilee, purposely staying away from Judea because the Jews there were waiting to take his life. But when the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was near, Jesus' brothers said to him, "You ought to leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do. No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world." For even his own brothers did not believe in him. Therefore Jesus told them, "The right time for me has not yet come; for you any time is right. The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil. You go to the Feast. I am not yet going up to this Feast, because for me the right time has not yet come." Having said this, he stayed in Galilee. However, after his brothers had left for the Feast, he went also, not publicly, but in secret.

Now at the Feast the Jews were watching for him and asking, "Where is that man?" Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, "He is a good man." Others replied, "No, he deceives the people." But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the Jews. Not until halfway through the Feast did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach. The Jews were amazed and asked, "How did this man get such learning without having studied?" Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for himself, but he who works for the honor of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him. Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?" "You are demon-possessed," the crowd answered. "Who is trying to kill you?" Jesus said to them, "I did one miracle, and you are all astonished. Yet, because Moses gave you circumcision (though actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs), you circumcise a child on the Sabbath. Now if a child can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing the whole man on the Sabbath?"

Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment." At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, "Isn't this the man they are trying to kill? Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Christ? But we know where this man is from; when the Christ comes, no one will know where he is from." Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, "Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, But I know him because I am from him and he sent me." At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his time had not yet come. Still, many in the crowd put their faith in him. They said, "When the Christ comes, will he do more miraculous signs than this man?" The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him. Jesus said, "I am with you for only a short time, and then I go to the one who sent me. You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come." The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him?"

Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks? What did he mean when he said, 'You will look for me, but you will not find me,' and 'Where I am, you cannot come'?" On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. On hearing his words, some of the people said, "Surely this man is the Prophet." Others said, "He is the Christ." Still others asked, "How can the Christ come from Galilee? Does not the Scripture say that the Christ will come from David's family and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?" Thus the people were divided because of Jesus. Some wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him.

Yeshua is the light of the world. John 8:12

Succos and Yericho by Atara Sendor, Sharon Chapter
(www.betemunah.org/succhoth.html):

Every day of Succos, we circle the Bima once with our Lulavim for Hoshanos. On Hoshana Raba, we circle the Bima seven times, as they circled the Mizbeach in the Beis HaMikdash. Why do we circle specifically seven times? Why do we circle seven on Hoshana Raba and not on the other days of Succos? The answers to these questions give insight to the ultimate purpose of the entire Chag of Succos.

The Sefer Ta'amei HaMinhagim U'Mekorei HaDinim states that the circling seven times is parallel to the seven times Yehoshua and his army circled the city of Yericho before capturing it, which was an extremely pivotal act.

The connection is through the Hebrew root. The word VaEsoveva, and I will circle, only appears in two places in the Tanach. In Shir HaShirim (3:2), it says "Akuma Na Va'asoveva Es Ha'ir / I will get up and circle the city," which, to the author of Sefer Ta'amei HaMinhagim U'Mekorei HaDinim, refers to Yericho. Tehillim (26:6) says, "Va'esoveva es mizbechecha, Hashem / I will circle your altar, Hashem," which connects circling the Mizbeach to circling Yericho; the Mizbeach was circled seven times on Hoshana Rabba just as Yericho was circled seven times when conquering it.

We have connected Yericho to the Mizbeach. The great Rebbeim of Rupshitz clarify the connection between Yericho and Hoshana Rabba vis a vis the Mizbeach by bringing down the less practiced custom of blowing the shofar seven times during the Hakafos on Hoshana Rabba. They say the source of this was also from Yericho. In Yericho, the people circled the city once a day for six days, and on the seventh day, they circled seven times, while the Kohanim blew shofros and carried the Aron around. The blowing - seemingly miraculously - made the city wall fall down. On Hoshana Rabba, we should blow the shofar and do the seven Hakafos to make the "... iron wall between us and the Holy One Blessed Be He fall down."

This, in fact, is the purpose of Hoshana Rabba and Succos in general: to break down the barrier between us and Hashem. The beginning of the pasuk in Tehillim is "Erchatz B'Nikayon Kapi / I will wash my hands in purity." The purpose of this circling of the Mizbeach is to purify the self, which is what we try to do on Succos. One may incorrectly believe that the only intense days for asking for forgiveness are from Rosh Hashana to Yom Kippur. However, Succos is such a day, too. For seven days, we live in a Succah, removing ourselves from material possessions which distance us from G-d. The number seven traditionally represents, shlemus, completion, within nature. On Succos we spend seven complete days getting close to G-d through nature. By the seventh day, hopefully, we are ready to crash the gates of heaven.

Talmudic Texts

Talmud - Mas. Shabbath 22a R. Joshua b. Levi was asked: Is it permitted to make use of the booth decorations during the whole of the seven days?³⁰ He answered him [the questioner], Behold! it was said, One must not count money by the Hanukkah light.³¹ God of Abraham! exclaimed R. Joseph, he makes that which was taught dependent upon what was not taught: [of] booths it was taught, whereas of Hanukkah it was not. For it was taught: if one roofs it [the booth] in accordance with its requirements, beautifies it with hangings and sheets, and suspends therein nuts, peaches, almonds, pomegranates, grape clusters, garlands of ears of corn, wines, oils and flours; he may not use them until the conclusion of the last day of the Feast; yet if he stipulates concerning them,³² it is all according to his stipulation. — Rather, said R. Joseph: The basis³³ of all is [the law relating to] blood.³⁴

Talmud - Mas. Shabbath 45a Resh Lakish asked R. Johanan: What of wheat sown in the earth or eggs under a fowl?³⁵ When does R. Simeon reflect [the prohibition of] mukzeh? Where one has not rejected it [an object] with his [own] hands; but where one rejects it with his own hands,³⁶ he accepts [the interdict of] mukzeh: or perhaps there is no difference? — He answered him: R. Simeon accepts mukzeh only in respect of the oil in the [Sabbath] lamp while it is burning: since it was set apart for its precept,³⁷ and set apart on account of its prohibition.³⁸ But does he not [accept it where] it [only] was set apart for its precept?³⁹ Surely it was taught: If one roofs it [the booth] in accordance with its requirements, beautifies it with hangings and sheets, and suspends therein nuts, peaches, almonds, pomegranates, grape clusters, garlands of ears of corn, wines, oil, and flours, he may not use them until the conclusion of the last Festival day of the Feast; yet if he stipulates concerning them, it is all according to his stipulation.⁴⁰ And how do you know that this is R. Simeon's view? Because R. Hiyya b. Joseph recited before R. Johanan: Wood must not be taken from a hut on a Festival,⁴¹ save from what is near it;⁴² but R. Simeon permits it.⁴³ Yet both agree in respect to the sukkah of the Festival⁴⁴ that it is forbidden on the Festival;⁴⁵ yet if he [the owner] stipulated

concerning it, it all depends on his stipulation!⁴⁶ — We mean, similar to the oil in the lamp: since it was set apart for its precept, it was set apart for its interdict.⁴⁷ It was stated likewise: R. Hiyya b. Abba said in R. Johanan's name: R. Simeon rejects mukzeh save in a case similar to the oil in the lamp while it is burning: since it was set apart for its precept, it was set apart for its interdict.

Talmud - Mas. Ta'anith 2a C H A P T E R I MISHNAH. WHEN DO WE [BEGIN TO] MAKE MENTION OF THE POWER OF RAIN?⁴⁸ R. ELIEZER SAYS: ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE FEAST.⁴⁹ R. JOSHUA SAYS: ON THE LAST DAY OF THE FEAST. R. JOSHUA SAID TO HIM: SEEING THAT RAIN ON THE FEAST IS A SIGN OF [GOD'S] ANGER⁵⁰ WHY MAKE MENTION OF IT? THEREUPON R. ELIEZER SAID TO HIM: I ALSO DID NOT SAY TO PRAY⁵¹ BUT TO MAKE MENTION [IN THE WORD] 'HE CAUSETH THE WIND TO BLOW AND THE RAIN TO FALL'⁵² -IN ITS DUE SEASON. HE [R. JOSHUA] REPLIED TO HIM: IF THAT IS SO ONE SHOULD AT ALL TIMES MAKE MENTION OF IT.

WE PRAY FOR RAIN ONLY CLOSE TO THE RAINY SEASON. R. JUDAH SAYS: THE LAST TO STEP BEFORE THE ARK⁵³ ON THE LAST DAY OF THE FEAST MAKES MENTION, THE FIRST DOES NOT; ON THE FIRST DAY OF PASSOVER THE FIRST MAKES MENTION, THE LAST DOES NOT.

Talmud - Mas. Ta'anith 2b R. ELIEZER SAYS: ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE FEAST etc. The question was asked, Whence did R. Eliezer derive this? Did he learn it from Lulab⁵⁴ or from the Libation of Water?⁵⁵ If he learnt it from Lulab, then just as the obligation of the use of the Lulab comes into force on the [first] day of Tabernacles, so too should we begin to make mention of rain on that day. Or perhaps he learnt it from Libation. [If so, then] just as Water Libation may be [carried out] on the evening [preceding the first day] — (for a Master [interpreting the verse], And the meal-offering thereof and their drink-offerings,⁵⁶ said, Even by night)-so too should one begin to make mention of rain on that evening!⁵⁷ — Come and hear: R. Abbahu said: R. Eliezer deduced it from Lulab only. Some there are who say: R. Abbahu had a tradition. Whilst others say: He based it on a Baraitha. Which is the Baraitha? — It has been taught: 'When do we [begin to] make mention of Rain? R. Eliezer says: From the time of the taking up of the Lulab; R. Joshua says, From the time when the Lulab is discarded.⁵⁸ Said R. Eliezer: Seeing that these Four Species are intended only to make intercession for water,⁵⁹ therefore as these cannot [grow] without water so the world [too] cannot exist without water. R. Joshua said to him: Is not rain on the Feast a sure sign of [God's] anger? R. Eliezer replied: I too did not say to pray but to make mention. And just as one makes mention of the Revival of the Dead all the year round⁶⁰ although it will take place only in its proper time, so too should mention be made of the Power of Rain all the year round although it comes only in its due season. Therefore if one desires to make mention all the year round he may do so. Rabbi says: I hold the view that when one ceases to pray [for rain]⁶¹ one should also no longer make mention of it. R. Judah b. Bathyra says: On the second day of the Feast one [begins] to make mention. R. Akiba says: On the sixth day of the Feast. R. Judah says in the name of R. Joshua: The last to step before the Ark on the last day of the Feast makes mention, the first does not; on the first day of Passover the first makes mention, the last does not. Did not then R. Eliezer reply well to R. Joshua?- R. Joshua can answer you: It is quite in order to make mention of the Revival of the Dead [all the year round], since any day may be its time, but is rain seasonable at all times? Have we not learnt: Should Nisan terminate and then rain fall it is a sign of [God's] anger, for it is said, Is it not wheat harvest to-day etc.?⁶²

Talmud - Mas. Sukkah 48a MISHNAH. THE SUKKAH [MUST BE USED ALL] SEVEN DAYS. HOW IS THIS [TO BE UNDERSTOOD]? WHEN A MAN HAS FINISHED HIS [LAST] MEAL,⁶³ HE MAY NOT DISMANTLE HIS SUKKAH.⁶⁴ HE MAY, HOWEVER, REMOVE ITS FURNITURE⁶⁵ FROM THE AFTERNOON ONWARDS IN HONOUR OF THE LAST DAY OF THE FESTIVAL.⁶⁶

Talmud - Mas. Sukkah 55b R. Eleazar⁶⁷ stated, [To what do those seventy bullocks⁶⁸ \[that were offered during the seven days of the Festival\] correspond? To the seventy nations.](#)⁶⁹ To what does the single bullock [of the Eighth Day] correspond? To the unique nation.⁷⁰ This may be compared to a mortal king who said to his servants, 'Prepare for me a great banquet'; but on the last day he said to his beloved friend, 'Prepare for me a simple meal that I may derive benefit from you'.

Talmud - Mas. Baba Bathra 147a Our Rabbis taught: Ahitophel advised his sons three things: Take no part⁷¹ in strife, and do not rebel against the government of the House of David, and [if] the weather on the Festival of Pentecost is fine sow wheat⁷² Mar Zutra stated: It was said, 'cloudy'⁷³ The Nehardeans said in the name of R. Jacob: 'Fine' [does] not [mean] absolutely fine, nor does 'cloudy' mean completely overcast,

but even [when it is] ‘cloudy’ and the north wind blows [the clouds], it is regarded as ‘fine’.⁷⁴ R. Abba said to R. Ashi: We rely upon [the weather information] of R. Isaac b. Abdimi. For R. Isaac b. Abdimi said: [At] the termination of⁷⁵ the last day of Tabernacles, all watched the smoke of the wood pile.⁷⁶ [If] it⁷⁷ inclined towards the north, the poor rejoiced and landowners⁷⁸ were distressed because [that⁷⁹ was an indication] that the yearly rains would be heavy⁸⁰ and the crops would decay.⁸¹ [If] it inclined towards the south, the poor were distressed and landowners rejoiced because [that⁸² was an indication] that the yearly rains would be scanty and the crops could be preserved⁸³ ‘ [If] it inclined towards the east, all were glad;⁸⁴ towards the west, all were distressed.⁸⁵ A contradiction was raised: The east [wind] is always beneficial; the west [wind] is always harmful; the north wind is beneficial for wheat that reached⁸⁶ [the stage of] a third [of its maturity].⁸⁷ and harmful for olives in blossom; and the south wind is injurious’ for wheat that reached [the stage of] a third [of maturity] . and beneficial for olives in blossom. And R. Joseph. (others say Mar Zutra and others say. R. Nahman b. Isaac), said: Your mnemonic is, ‘Table in the north and candelabra in the south;⁸⁸ the one⁸⁹ increases its own⁹⁰ and the other⁹¹ increases its own.⁹² -There is no difficulty: This⁹³ for us,⁹⁴ and that⁹⁵ for them⁹⁶ It was taught: Abba Saul said: Fine [weather at] the Festival of Pentecost is a good sign⁹⁷ for all the year. R. Zebid said: If the first day of the New Year is warm, all's the year will be warm; if cold, all⁹⁸ the year will be cold. Of what [religious] significance is this⁹⁹ [weather information]?

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CHAPTER 10

Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah

Immediately following the last day of *Sukkot*, *Hoshana Rabbah*, is *Shemini Atzeret* (the eighth day of assembly). *Shemini Atzeret* along with *Simchat Torah* are celebrated together on Tishrei 22 and 23. As it is written, "On the eighth day you shall hold a solemn gathering (*Atzeret*); you shall no work at your occupations" (Numbers [*Bamidbar*] 29:35). The rabbis interpreted this verse to mean that G-d asks all who made a pilgrimage for *Sukkot* to tarry (*atzeret*, which comes from the Hebrew root word meaning "to hold back") with Him one additional day. From this, the rabbis concluded that *Shemini Atzeret* is an independent festival.

To understand *Shemini Atzeret* and *Simchat Torah*, we must review a few things. First, the seven days of Passover (*Pesach*) are followed by a 49-day period of counting the omer, which climaxes with the fiftieth day of Pentecost (*Shavuot*). Thus, the liberation of Passover (*Pesach*) is linked with the revelation and giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, known as *Shavuot* (Pentecost). If we look at the festival cycle, *Shemini Atzeret* is analogous to *Shavuot*, which is understood to be the conclusion or *atzeret* to Passover (*Pesach*). Just like *Shavuot*, a one-day festival, is the conclusion to *Pesach*, a seven-day festival, so *Shemini Atzeret*, a one-day festival, is the conclusion to *Sukkot*, a seven-day festival.

Therefore, we see that *Shemini Atzeret* is the eighth day -- that is the day after "seven." Seven, being a perfect number in the Bible, signifies a complete unit of time as each week ends with the seventh day called the *Shabbat* (Sabbath). Thus, the eighth day is the day after time. It is the end of both kinds of time. It is thus not just the promise of redemption, but the actual moment of it. G-d said, "Remain with Me (*atzeret*) an extra day," a time beyond time.

Simchat Torah: Rejoicing in the Torah

At last comes the most joyous day of all, the day of *Simchat Torah*, rejoicing in the Torah. *Simchat Torah* is celebrated on the twenty-third of Tishrei, or the day following *Shemini Atzeret*. Once again, it should be noted that the Hebrew word *Torah* means "teaching [or instruction]," for it teaches us our way of life, the kind of life G-d wants us to lead. The *Torah* is the foundation for understanding the entire Bible.

The Cyclical Reading of the Torah

Until the early Middle Ages, there was more than one cycle with regard to the reading of the Torah. In fact, the most widespread cycle was the triennial one, in which the reading of the Torah took three years and ended before Passover (*Pesach*).

In modern times, the annual reading cycle became predominant. Therefore, *Simchat Torah* became the end of the reading cycle and thus its own festival day. As just stated, the Torah reading cycle is concluded on *Simchat Torah*. However, at this time, it is immediately started again from the beginning. This shows that there is no end to the Torah, and that it must be read and studied constantly, over and over again. The Torah, like G-d Himself who gave it, is everlasting (Matthew [*Mattityahu*] 5:17-18).

Simchat Torah celebrates a *Torah* of joy, a *Torah* without restrictions or a sense of burden.

Yeshua and Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah

Tishrei 22, *Shemini Atzeret*, and Tishrei 23, *Simchat Torah*, in ancient times were considered one long day and celebrated on Tishrei 22. *Simchat Torah* is a celebration of rejoicing in the Torah.

As it is written in John (*Yochanan*) 7:37, "In the last day, that great day of the feast [of *Sukkot*]...." This day would be known as *Hoshana Rabbah*, or Tishrei 21. In John (*Yochanan*) 8:1-2, it is written, "Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. And early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came unto Him; and He sat down, and taught them." This is the next day after *Hoshana Rabbah*, the day attached to *Sukkot* called *Shemini Atzeret*. Once again, in ancient times that day was also called *Simchat Torah*, the rejoicing in the Torah. So, in John (*Yochanan*) 8:5, we see *Yeshua*, the author of the Torah, is questioned about the Torah on the day referred to as "the rejoicing in the Torah"

The Spiritual Understanding of Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah

In Deuteronomy (*Devarim*) 31:9-13, at the Feast of *Sukkot* (Tabernacles), you are to read the Torah. The seventh year is called the year of release (Deuteronomy [*Devarim*] 31:10); all debts are to be forgiven at this time (Exodus [*Shemot*] 21:2; Leviticus [*Vayikra*] 25:1-4; Deuteronomy [*Devarim*] 15:1-12; Jeremiah [*Yermiyahu*] 34:8-22). The seven years are a picture of the 7,000-year plan of G-d (Psalm [*Tehillim*] 90:4; 2 Peter 3:8). The seventh year is the year of release and is a picture of the seventh day or the Messianic age, the Millennium, or the *Athid Lavo*. *Yeshua* referred to this in both Isaiah (*Yeshayahu*) 61:1-3 and Luke 4:16-21. The phrase, "liberty to the captives" in Isaiah (*Yeshayahu*) 61:1, speaks of the year of release. *Yeshua* is saying, in essence, "I am that release. Trust in Me and you will be free."

In the days of *Yeshua*, there was a seven-year cycle of reading the Torah. In years one through three, the people would read from the Torah, the prophets and the writings. In years three through six, they would start over. In year seven, they would read from them all. While reading, the priest would stand on a podium (*bema*) and give the understanding and teaching (Nehemiah 8:1-12). This was done during the Feast of *Sukkot* (Tabernacles) (Nehemiah 8:2,13-14,18).

In the future, we will experience the real *Simchat Torah* during the time G-d judges the believers in the Messiah according to the lives they lived on this earth. At that time, when we hear the truth of the Bible and understand G-d's Word, we will cry when we see how we have failed to keep and follow the Bible and G-d's truths. But G-d will say, "Do not sorrow, for the joy of the L-rd is your strength" (see Nehemiah [*Nechemiah*] 8:9-10). At this time, we will not be going through the rehearsal (*miqra*) of the festival, but we will be experiencing the "season of our joy," the time of the Messianic kingdom on earth. The reading, teaching, and understanding of the Torah will be at its height during the Messianic age, the Millennium. In Isaiah (*Yeshayahu*) 2:1-5 and Micah (*Michah*) 4:1-5, *Yeshua*, the Messiah, the author and teacher of the Torah, will teach all the peoples of the earth the ways of the Torah.

Rain and Dew: (Geshem and Tal: A Prayer for Rain)

On the festival of *Shemini Atzeret*, the *Musaf*, the additional service on this day, begins with a special prayer for rain (*geshem*). The reason for these special prayers is understandable enough (if you have lived in the land of Israel). The winter months in the Holy Land are the rain season, and the entire life of the country depends on rain. If the rains come down in their due season and in sufficient quantity, the rich soil will produce abundant crops and fruits; if not, the country is doomed to famine and starvation. During the summer months, there is no rain; it's the dry season. During these rainless months, the earth would have been completely parched, the top soil would have turned into dust and been blown away by the wind, and the land would have turned into barren desert -- were it not for the dew that settles on the cool soil during the hours of the night, drenching the ground with the soft moisture which we know as dew and which sparkles in the

early rays of the sun like pearls. Thus, the rain in the winter and the dew in the summer are vitally needed to sustain life.

Spiritual Application (Halacha). Because this chapter concludes the festivals, we will review the spiritual significance of the festivals to the individual believer in the Messiah and how they relate to his life. Therefore, at this time, we can conclude with the spiritual significance of the fall festivals, especially *Sukkot*, *Shemini Atzeret*, and *Simchat Torah*.

G-d designed the agricultural and weather seasons in Israel to parallel the life of every believer in *Yeshua* who seeks to love Him and serve Him with all his heart. With this in mind, let us examine how this is true.

Every time a person receives *Yeshua* the Messiah as his own Savior, he spiritually experiences Passover (*Pesach*). He is to flee Egypt (*Mitzrayim*; the world's evil system and ways); trust (*emunah*) in the Messiah, the Lamb of G-d; and allow *Yeshua* to be the doorpost of his heart. As believers, we are then to seek to live holy lives before G-d and experience Unleavened Bread (*Hag HaMatzah*). Just as *Yeshua* rose from the dead, we are to consider our former ways dead to us and experience the newness of life in the Messiah. Once we do this, we can be immersed (baptized) in the Holy Spirit (*Ruach HaKodesh*) and have the power of G-d (the anointing) in our lives. Spiritually, we have experienced the spring harvest of Israel in our lives. When we accept *Yeshua* into our hearts and lives, He begins to teach us the Bible and show us how much He loves us, and we begin to grow in the knowledge of Him.

At that time, G-d will begin to take us on a spiritual journey through the wilderness of life. Spiritually, we will begin to experience the dry summer season of Israel. Many things in our lives will not go the way we expect them to or how we trust G-d for them to go. In the process of experiencing life's bitter disappointments and struggles, if we keep our eyes upon G-d, He will take us from Passover (*Pesach*) to *Shavuot* (Pentecost). There He will reveal His ways and His Word, the Bible, in a deeper and more progressive way. By keeping our eyes on the Messiah through life's struggles, G-d will not only reveal His Word, the Bible, to us in a greater way, but He also will refine our faith like fine flour, just as was done to the wheat during the days of counting the omer between Passover (*Pesach*) and *Shavuot* (Pentecost). Meanwhile, if we put our entire trust (*emunah*) in *Yeshua* while on our spiritual journey in the wilderness of life as G-d refines our faith and reveals Himself to us in a greater way, then our spiritual journey will not end in the wilderness of life (Hallelujah!). Instead G-d will take us forward to spiritually experience the fall festivals and our spiritual promised land.

It is when we spiritually experience the fall festivals -- especially the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*), *Shemini Atzeret* and *Simchat Torah* -- and enter into our spiritual promised land that G-d will anoint our lives for Him in an awesome way, as we live and serve Him, and we will then experience the greatest joy in our entire lives. Joy unspeakable! But we will experience not only joy, but also dancing, praise, victory, peace, and the power of G-d in our lives. Spiritually, we will be experiencing the fall harvest of Israel. The rain in the Bible speaks of two things: the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit (*Ruach HaKodesh*) and an in-depth understanding of *Yeshua* and His Word, the Bible, in our lives. Both the anointing of the Holy Spirit (*Ruach HaKodesh*) and great knowledge of spiritual truths will be present in our lives in order that we may accomplish the purpose G-d has for every one of our lives. Therefore, we have the anointing of G-d upon our lives so we may help to do our part to build up the Body of Messiah to full maturity and to establish the Kingdom of G-d on earth until we come to that day when we will rule and reign with the Messiah, the King of kings and Lord of lords on earth during the Messianic age, the Millennium, and for all eternity.

Messianic Fulfillment and Understanding

When G-d created man and put him in the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*), the Garden of Eden was like paradise, Heaven, or the world to come, known in Hebrew as the *olam haba*. However, man sinned and as a result, both man and the earth was diminished in comparison to the original glory and beauty in which it was created. As a result, G-d laid out a 7,000-year plan to restore both man and the earth back to the glory and majesty of the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*). The Messiah was to play a central role in this redemption.

In Hosea 6:3 and Joel 2:23, the Scriptures tell us that the coming of the Messiah *Yeshua* will be like the rain. As previously discussed, in Israel there are the spring rains that are in the form of dew and showers, and the fall rains that make up the great rainy season. In His wisdom, G-d gave the weather season in Israel to teach about the coming of the Messiah. Just as there are mainly spring rains and fall rains in Israel, G-d designed for two comings of the Messiah. During the first coming of the Messiah, the Messiah would fulfill the role of *Messiah ben Joseph*, the suffering Messiah. During His second coming, the Messiah would fulfill the role of

Messiah ben David, the King Messiah. Those who would receive the Messiah in the season of His first coming would, spiritually, be like the spring rains in Israel and G-d would pour out His Holy Spirit (*Ruach HaKodesh*) upon all people at this time. However, the greatest number of people who would accept the Messiah would be during the season of the fall rains in Israel, which speaks of the Messiah's second coming. The greatest outpouring of the Holy Spirit (*Ruach HaKodesh*) would be at this time as well.

This great outpouring of the Holy Spirit (*Ruach HaKodesh*) and the knowledge of the Messiah on earth, will reach their greatest height during the Messianic age, the Millennium, and continuing into eternity. This is what the fall rains in Israel are spiritually all about and are why G-d instructed the people to pray for rain during the festival season of *Sukkot* including *Shemini Atzeret* and *Simchat Torah*. After all, *Sukkot* (Tabernacles) and *Shemini Atzeret* and *Simchat Torah* were given to us by G-d to instruct us what life would be like during the Messianic age and all eternity when the knowledge of the Messiah and the Spirit of G-d will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, as prophesied in the Book of Zechariah. For *Yeshua* the Messiah is both the Former and Latter Rain and the Teacher of Righteousness (Hosea [*Hoshea*] 6:3; Joel [*Y Joel*] 2:23; Psalm [*Tehillim*] 72:6; 84:5-6; John [*Yochanan*] 3:2; Isaiah [*Yeshayahu*] 55:10-12). How glorious it will be to live with the Messiah during those days! This is the essence of the festivals of the L-rd!

A Celebration Out of Time by Tim O'Hearn:

The last day of Succoth, the Feast of Booths, is commonly called **Hoshana Rabbah** (the Great Hosanna). The ceremony dates back at least to the Maccabean period, about 165 BC, and is related to a ceremony praying for rain for the following year.

As on the other days of Succoth, the celebrants carry the "four species," the representatives of the types of plants specified in Leviticus 23--myrtle, citron, willow, and palm. They parade around the synagogue seven times (as opposed to the one time on each of the other days of Succoth) quoting Psalm 118:25: "Save now [Hosanna], I beseech thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity." The days is called the Great Hosanna because it is repeated seven times, rather than once.

Succoth, and therefore **Hoshana Rabbah**, always come in the fall, the first day of Succoth coming four days after Yom Kippur. This year (2000) Succoth begins on October 14, and **Hoshana Rabbah** falls on October 20.

Imagine the surprise of the Jewish leaders, then, when one *spring*, a week before Passover, the ceremony was enacted on the streets of Jerusalem. The crowd was lining one particular street, carpeting the road with palm (and possibly myrtle and willow) branches, and shouting the Hosanna, along with the following verse of Psalm 118: "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord: we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord." Not only were they celebrating out of season, they were shouting the Hosanna before a young, troublesome Rabbi who was entering Jerusalem on a donkey, and equating him to the messiah. Maybe a few of the teachers even associated this with Zechariah 9:9.

It was strange that the people were celebrating six months out of phase. It was strange, but it was appropriate. It is said that Rosh HaShanna is the Day of Judgement, when God decrees what will happen the following year. After the ten days of repentance, He seals what he has written (and presumably revised) on the Day of Atonement. But he may still change his mind for another ten days. On **Hoshana Rabbah**, the gates of judgement are closed for the year. In a similar way, Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem was really the closing of the gates to any other path except to the cross. He would pray later "let this cup pass from me." (Matt 26:39) However, the people's reaction in a Great Hosanna on his entry into the city had such an impact on the rulers (Lk 19:47; Jn 12:19) that he could no longer turn back.

The **Hoshana Rabbah** out of time, though, celebrated not only the sealing of Jesus' path to the cross, but the sealing of the way of salvation for all people for all time.

But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. (Heb 9: 26-28)

***Sukkot* (Tishri 15)**

The third Pilgrimage festival, it is also known as The Feast of Booths (Tabernacles), The Feast of Ingathering, or just simply The Hag (The Festival). Sukkot is an eight day festival: the first two days are celebrated as full holidays, the following five days (*Hol Hamo'ed*) are weekdays that retain some aspects of the festival, the seventh day (*Hoshanah Rabbah*) and eighth (*Shemini Atzeret*) days have special observances of their own. Liberal congregations typically only celebrate the first and eighth days.

Sukkot is also called "*zman simchaseinu*" (the time of our rejoicing). This is because the Torah tells us that at that time when we harvest it is a time for rejoicing. We also rejoice in the coming start of a new cycle of Torah, as Simchat Torah ends the Sukkot holiday. Succot is also known as Hag ha-Asif, "The Festival of the Ingathering", due to the fact that it falls during the season when the final summer produce is gathered from the field. Another name is simply Ha-Hag, "The Holiday" par excellence (Ex. 23:16, II Chron. 7:8).

The first day of Succot is a full holiday on which work is prohibited. The next six days have their own special regulations, but work is permitted under most circumstances. Outside Eretz Israel, the second day of Succot is also observed as a full holiday and the following five days are hol ha-mo'ed.

Succot has a number of unique observances. During the entire seven days (prior to Sheini Atzeret), one is required to dwell "in the succah", a temporary structure whose roof must be made of materials that grow from the ground, e.g. palm fronds, tree branches, bamboo poles. Dwelling in the succah commemorates the temporary structures in which the Israelites dwelt during their 40 years wandering after the Exodus from Egypt (Lev. 23:42-43). On each of the seven days of Succot, except the Sabbath, the Four Species - the palm branch (lulav), citron (etrog), myrtle, and willow - are taken up (after the appropriate benediction) and waved. The species are held also during the recitation of Hallel, and during the recitation of Hoshanot, when the entire congregation joins in a procession encircling the bimah. One such procession is held as part of the Shaharit service on each of the seven days. The seventh day of Succot, i.e. the last day of hol ha-mo'ed, is known also by the name Hoshana Rabbah, "The Great Hoshana." On Hoshana Rabbah seven such processions are held during and after which appropriate prayers are recited. After these willow branches are beaten on the ground.

Sukkot commemorates the life of the Israelites in the desert during their journey to the promised land. During their wandering in the desert they lived in booths (Sukkot). Four species of plants are used to celebrate the holiday: the lulav (palm branch), etrog (lemon-like citron), myrtle, and willow. The etrog is handled separately, while the other three species are bound together, and are collectively referred to as the lulav.

There is a special commandment in the Torah to rejoice on Succot, "You shall hold the Feast of Booths for seven days. You shall rejoice in your festival .. and you shall have nothing but joy" (Deut. 16:13-15). In the Temple period, an observance unique to Succot was the Simhat Bet ha-Sho'evah that accompanied the special water libations of Succot, and the celebrations at that time were especially joyous. Once in every seven years, during Succot at the termination of the Sabbatical Year (Shemitah), there was a public reading of certain passages of the Book of Deuteronomy. This reading, known as hakhel, is commanded in Deuteronomy 31:10-13.

During the five intermediate days of Sukkot, it is customary to read the book of Ecclesiastes.

***Hosha'nah Rabbah* (The seventh day of Sukkot).**

This day closes the period of repentance that began on Rosh Hashanah. Tradition has made this day into a sequel to the Days of Awe, lengthening the period of penitence and postponing the day when final sentence is to be rendered.

On this day the worshippers go round the bimah of the synagogue seven times while holding the four species. During the circuits, piyyutim are recited with the refrain Hoshana (Save us, we beseech thee). The name Hoshana Rabbah (the great hoshana) derives from the sevenfold circuit. The source of this custom is in Temple worship. During the festival of Succot, according to tradition, the world is judged for water, and it was the custom to take branches of the willow and go around the alter saying "O Lord, deliver us! O Lord, let us prosper!" (PS. 118:25). Each day the alter would be circled once, and on the seventh day seven times, The custom was then to beat the ground with the willow branch after saying the hoshanot prayers.

In the Talmud, Hoshana Rabbah is referred to as a day when everyone comes to the synagogue. Its special character was emphasized during the time of the geonim, who saw it as the day in which each human being receives from heaven a note on which his fate is registered. And so there are those who greet each other on

this day with the Aramaic blessing a pitka tava, or in Yiddish gut kveitl. Many and varied liturgical customs have developed for Hoshana Rabbah. The most widespread are the inclusion of the additional Sabbath and festival psalms in the Shaharit (morning) service and the introduction of High Holidays melody and usage for the ritual of taking out the Torah from the ark. Another custom is to remain awake studying Torah throughout the night. This custom was already known in the thirteenth century, and its source is in the need to give additional time to those who had not yet finished reading the Torah and needed to finish by Simhat Torah.

Shemini Atzeret (Tishri 22)

The eighth day of Sukkot. In the Talmud it is written that "the eighth day [of Sukkot] is a separate festival", so Sukkot is really observed as seven days, and Shemini Atzeret is observed as a separate holiday. It marks the beginning of the rainy season in Israel.

The holiday is referred to in the Bible as atzeret, which means assembly or closing. It is a closing in that it follows the seven days of Succot and closes that holiday and the Tishri holiday season. Thus the name Shemini Atzeret means the closing or assembling of the eighth day, although obligations of Succot are not observed.

By rabbinic tradition, Shemini Atzeret celebrates the conclusion of the annual cycle of the reading of the Torah. This celebration is known as Simhat Torah. In the Diaspora (exile) Shemini Atzeret is a two-day festival, with the Torah reading concluded on the second day, and it is common to refer to the second day as Simhat Torah and only to the first day as Shemini Atzeret. In Israel, where the festival lasts but one day, the two names are used interchangeably.

In the Diaspora, a few observances of Succot "spill over" into Shemini Atzeret, and according to some customs, the meals on that day are taken in the succah, although the benediction recited when eating in the succah is omitted. On the other hand, the benediction She-heheyann, marking the advent of a new holiday, is recited. In the Diaspora, the ceremony of bidding farewell to the succah is performed on the first day of Shemini Atzeret, whereas in Israel it is performed on the seventh and final day of Succot.

The prayer for rain (Tefillat Geshem) is recited on Shemini Atzeret and from the time of its recitation, the phrase mashiv ha-ruah u-morid ha-geshem (He causes the wind to blow and the rain to fall) is inserted in the second benediction of the Amidah. This continues until Passover when the phrase is replaced with morid ha-tal (He brings dew). Among Ashkenazi Jews, the memorial prayer, Yizkor, is recited on Shemini Atzeret.

Simhat Torah (Tishri 23)

The celebration that marks the conclusion of the annual cycle of readings of the Torah (Keri'ar ha-Torah) in the synagogue. Simhat Torah is a rabbinic institution timed to coincide with the biblical festival Shemini Atzeret, the eighth day of Succot, and which in Eretz Israel lasts but one day. Consequently, in Eretz Israel, Simhat Torah and Shemini Atzeret are in practice one and the same holiday. In the Diaspora (exile), where Shemini Atzeret lasts for two days, each day is popularly known by a different name: the first day as Shemini Atzeret, and the second day, when the reading of the final portion of Deuteronomy is concluded, as Simhat Torah.

The last portion of the Torah is read on this day. The following Shabbat the reading of the Torah starts again at the beginning of Bereshit (Genesis). Festivities begin in the evening with Ma'ariv. There are seven hakafot (processions) of the Torah around the Synagogue. Services are joyous, and humorous deviations from the standard service are allowed, and even expected.

In antiquity there were actually two different traditions with regard to the weekly Torah readings. In Eretz Israel, the cycle lasted three years. In the Babylonian tradition, the cycle began on the first Sabbath after the holidays of the month of Tishri. This became the Sabbath of Genesis (Shabbath Bereshit). The cycle was completed a year later on the last of the Tishri holidays, i.e. Shemini Atzeret. In time, all Jewish communities adopted the Babylonian system.

The central features of the Simhat Torah celebrations are the hakafot - the perambulations around the synagogue, with the participants carrying the scrolls of the Torah, to the accompaniment of joyous singing and dancing. The hakafot are held both in the Arvit and in the Shaharit services. After the morning hakafot, three scrolls are taken from the holy ark for the Torah reading service. From the first scroll, the final portion of Deuteronomy is read to conclude the entire Torah; from the second scroll, the first chapter of Genesis with a few additional verses in order to indicate there is no pause in the cycle of the Torah readings;

while from the third scroll, the appropriate maftir is read relating to the ancient sacrificial service for Shemini Atzeret. According to custom, everyone is called for an aliyah la-Torah, and different practices have developed in this connection. In some congregations, the Torah reading is repeated several times in order to accommodate all the worshippers with an aliyah in other groups of worshippers ascend together for the reading; while in most non-Orthodox synagogues women worshippers also approach the bimah for the aliyot. Because of the emphasis on the Torah as the heritage of every Jew, even young children who have not yet reached Bar Mitzvah age are honored with special aliyah. They come up to the bimah accompanied by an adult who leads them in the traditional blessing, as a large tallit is held over them. The person honored with the last aliyah la-Torah is named Hatan Torah, the Bridegroom of the Law, while the one called for the first aliyah of the Genesis portion is named Hatan Bereshit, the Bridegroom of Genesis. In modern Israel, the custom had developed to organize a second hakkafot celebration on the night after the conclusion of the festival. These second hakkafot have become public celebrations and are frequently held to the accompaniment of joyous orchestral music.

Rivers of Living Waters by Doug Ward:

Many of the events recorded in the gospel of John occurred during the annual Hebrew festival seasons. John's accounts of these events have much to teach us about the ways in which the festivals direct us to Jesus Christ.

For example, John 7-9 chronicles the last Feast of Tabernacles of Jesus' earthly ministry (see John 7:2). During that festival, Jesus made the following pronouncement:

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, "if any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7:37-38, KJV)

John goes on to explain in v. 39 that the "water" referred to in v. 37-38 is the Holy Spirit. Jesus was saying that those who believed on him could come to him to receive the Holy Spirit.

Jesus' statements caused great amazement and controversy among his audience (v. 40-53). Some asserted that he must be the Messiah, that great Prophet spoken of by Moses in Deut. 18:15, 18. Officers who had been ordered by religious authorities to arrest Jesus (v. 32) returned to their superiors empty-handed. When asked why they had not seized him, they answered, "No one ever spoke the way this man does." (v. 46, NIV)

Why did Jesus' proclamation in John 7:37-38 elicit such a strong response? To understand the full impact of this famous passage on its original hearers--and its significance for us today--let's take an in-depth look at these verses and their historical and cultural background.

The Water Libation Ceremony

John specifically mentions that Jesus spoke the words of John 7:37-38 on "the last day, that great day of the feast." This was probably the seventh day of the Feast, a day known in Jewish tradition as *Hoshana Rabbah* (literally the "great Hosanna"). **It is also possible that this was the eighth day (see [3]).** In any case, commentators agree that Jesus made his statement in the context of the water libation ceremony, a major part of first-century celebrations of the Feast in Jerusalem before the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. This ritual was carried out on each of the first seven days of the festival (see references[1-6]). [emphasis mine]

The water libation ceremony began with a priest drawing water from the pool of Siloam in a golden flagon that held about one and a half pints of water. A procession of men and women then accompanied the priest through the south gate of the Temple (which was called the Water Gate) and up the altar ramp. In the procession, people waved the *lulab*, a bouquet of palm, willow, and myrtle branches, and sang Psalms 113-118. The singing was accompanied by trumpet blasts and the music of reed flutes. The procession circled the altar seven times, and the priest then poured the water from the flagon into the western half of an open-drained, twin-tubbed silver bowl on the south side of the altar. He also poured wine from a silver flagon into the eastern half of that bowl.

One scripture associated with these festivities was Isa. 12:3 ("With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation."), and this was indeed a joyous time. It would later be written in the Babylonian Talmud (*Sukkah* 51 a-b) that "he who has not seen the rejoicing at the place of the Water-Drawing has not seen rejoicing in his life." [2]

The water-drawing celebration was well-known throughout the Jewish world. Some archaeological evidence of this has been found in Cyprus in the form of a six-sided glass bottle, now housed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, whose side panels contain pictures of the golden flagon, reed flutes, and other festival symbols. Since fragments of an identical bottle have been found in Jerusalem, and many Jews from the Diaspora traveled to Jerusalem for the festivals (e.g., Acts 2:5, 9-11), it has been speculated that this bottle may have been purchased in Jerusalem by a pilgrim from Cyprus as a first-century Feast of Tabernacles souvenir. Further evidence that the bottle dates from the first century is the fact that one of its panels contains the name of Ennion, a prominent Sidonian glassmaker of the first century [2, p. 117].

The waters of the ceremony held several levels of meaning for first-century feast goers. First of all, the water poured out on the south side of the altar represented rain that the people hoped God would provide for the following year's harvests during the coming rainy season. Prayers for rain were an essential part of the ceremony. An important scripture in this regard was Psalm 118:25: "Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity." In Hebrew, "save, I beseech" is *Hoshana*. This verse was the source of the name *Hoshana Rabbah* as a title for the seventh day of the Feast.

Interestingly, there is apparently another symbol of the festival prayers for rain on one of the six panels of the ancient glass bottle mentioned above: two keys. In Jewish tradition, rain is thought of as a key in the sole possession of God, based on Deut. 28:12: "The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season...." The keys pictured on the bottle may represent the early and latter rains, for which prayer was made at the Feast of Tabernacles and Passover [2, p. 118]. The presence of these keys on the bottle gives further indication of the importance of prayers for rain at the Feast during the time of Jesus.

Second, the ceremonial water of the Feast symbolized the Holy Spirit. A link between water and the Holy Spirit is implied in the parallel structure of Isaiah 44:3: "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." When the people prayed for rain at the Feast, they may also have prayed for the rain of the Holy Spirit to fall as was prophesied in Joel 2:28-29.

Third, the waters of the libation ceremony were associated with the waters prophesied to go forth from Jerusalem in the Messianic kingdom. This connection is founded in part upon the fourteenth chapter of Zechariah, which relates the Feast of Tabernacles to the Messianic kingdom (see v. 16-19) and is a traditional part of Jewish festival liturgy. In Zech. 14:8, we read, "And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem...." A second and more detailed source for this symbolism is Ezekiel 47:1-12, which describes a healing river that will flow out from beneath the prophesied future temple.

These second and third aspects of the symbolism of the water libation ceremony--the Holy Spirit and the cleansing waters of Messiah's kingdom--are of course related in the scriptures, for example in Ezekiel 36:25-27, 33:

Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.... Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded."

Further insight into the way these different symbols---rain, the Holy Spirit, and future living waters---fit together in the theology of the water-drawing celebration is available in the third chapter of the tractate *Sukkah* of the *Tosefta* (see [3]). The *Tosefta* (*Tosefta* literally means "addition") is a collection of rabbinic teachings that expand upon the instruction in the *Mishnah*. These teachings were probably compiled in written form some two centuries after the time of Jesus, but they are often based on oral traditions that could well have been known to those who heard Jesus' words.

The *Tosefta* (*Sukkah* 3:3-9) explains that the name "water gate" for the *south* gate of the temple and the pouring of the water from the golden flagon on the *south* side of the altar are derived from Ezekiel 47:1, which says, "The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar." (NIV) In other words, the water poured out in the temple ceremony was meant to symbolize the prophetic waters of Ezekiel 47. The *Tosefta* also identifies the healing waters of Ezekiel 47 with the living water of Zech. 14:8, and it emphasizes the cleansing function of those waters, citing Zech. 13:1. (In the NIV, Zech. 13:1 says,

"On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.")

The *Tosefta* (*Sukkah* 3:11-12) also brings out yet another aspect of the symbolism of the water ceremony: its recalling of the miracle of Exodus 17:1-7, in which water came out of the rock at Horeb when Moses struck that rock. The *Tosefta* refers to those waters as a "river," citing Ps. 78:20 and Ps. 105:41. Grigsby [3, p. 107] adds the interesting fact that one Aramaic paraphrase of Ps. 78:16 (which recounts the miracle at Horeb) refers to the waters that came out of the rock as "rivers of living water."

As feast goes looked back to the miracle of Exodus 17, they simultaneously looked ahead to the Messiah, who they believed would duplicate such miracles. Grigsby [3, p. 107] points out that a rabbinic commentary on Eccl 1:9 ("there is nothing new under the sun") gives the belief in a future water miracle as one example of history repeating itself: "As the first redeemer [i.e., Moses] caused the spring to arise, so the last redeemer [the Messiah] will cause water to rise up."

Two Questions about John 7:38

A knowledge of first-century festival customs can lend insights into two questions about John 7:38 that have often been posed by scholars. First, to what Scripture was Jesus referring in John 7:38? In our discussion of the water libation ceremony, we have looked at several candidates, including Zech. 14:8, Ezek. 47:1-12, Isa. 44:3, and Ps. 78:16. Given that Jewish teachers typically brought together several related scriptures to explain a point or principle, it is likely that Jesus had a number of passages in mind, including these four.

Second, from whose belly would the living waters flow--the believer's or Jesus'? The explanation given most often is that the waters flow from the believer in a new, spirit-led life. This is the reading that is implied in the KJV and given explicitly in the NIV. It is supported by John 4:14, in which Jesus says to the Samaritan woman at the well, "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (KJV)

It is worth noting that the Greek word for "springing" in John 4:14 is the same as the one used to describe the lame man "leaping" in Acts 3:8 when He was healed by Peter and John [6]. The words of John 7:38 and John 4:14 picture the Holy Spirit as a Producer of dynamic, life-giving results in the lives of Jesus' disciples.

The view that Jesus is saying that the living waters would flow from the believer is also supported by the punctuation given in the oldest known punctuated manuscripts [4, p. 160].

On the other hand, there is another reading (used in the NEB and Jerusalem Bible and mentioned in a footnote in the NIV) that is based on a different punctuation of the text. In this version, Jesus' invitation is rendered,

"If any man thirsts, let him come to me; and let him drink, who believes in me. As the scripture said, from his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

Here "his" could be interpreted as a reference to Jesus himself.

Those who support this second reading point out that it is consistent with the thrust of John 7:37-39, which pictures Jesus as the giver and the believer as the recipient of the Spirit. It has also been suggested that v. 38 might look ahead to John's account of the Crucifixion, where John mentions that "one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." (John 19:34, KJV)

Such a connection fits well with the customs of the water libation ceremony, where water and wine were poured before the altar, and with the typology of the miracle of Exodus 17. Just as "living water" came from the rock at Horeb when this rock was struck, so water mixed with the cleansing, purifying blood of Jesus' sacrifice came out from his pierced "belly" at the crucifixion. In addition, a link between John 7:38 and John 19:34 might help explain the statement in John 7:39 that "the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified."

Each interpretation has its merits. We note that in either case, Jesus Christ is the ultimate Source of the Spirit, the One to whom we must come to receive this life-giving "water."

The Implications of John 7:37-38

Having investigated the rich symbolism of the water libation ceremony of the Feast of Tabernacles, we are now in a position to grasp the great impact that Jesus' invitation of John 7:37-38 would have had on its original audience. Consider the following implications of John 7:37-38:

Jesus is the Messiah. In the first century, the Feast was a time of great messianic hope and fervor. The water celebration brought to mind prophecies of the Messianic kingdom like Zechariah 14 and Ezekiel 47. Another messianic reference that would have been on the minds of Jesus' listeners was Psalm 118:26 ("blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord"), which was sung during the festivities [1]. By proclaiming Himself as the Bringer of the prophesied "living waters," Jesus was implying that He was the Messiah, the one who would follow in Moses' footsteps and perform a new water miracle.

Jesus is God. In Jeremiah 2:13, God referred to himself as "the fountain of living waters." By calling himself the source of living waters, Jesus was indirectly asserting his divinity.

Jesus is the Incarnation of the future eschatological hope in the present. The healing, life-giving waters of Zech. 14 and Ezek. 47 were prophesied to come in a glorious future time. By announcing the availability of those waters, Jesus was saying that the first stages of the kingdom had arrived with Him.

Jesus is the new Temple. Jesus had previously referred to his body as a temple (John 2:19-22), and He made this connection again in John 7:37-38. The living waters of Ezekiel 47 were to emanate from the prophesied temple, and Jesus identified Himself with the temple by saying that He was the Source of living waters. (For further development of this symbolism, see Rev.21:22; 22:1.)

Jesus is the foundation stone and cornerstone. In Jewish tradition, Israel was the center of the world, Jerusalem was the center of Israel, the temple was the center of Jerusalem, the Holy Place was the center of the temple, the Holy of Holies was the center of the Holy Place, and the foundation stone under the ark of the covenant was the center of the Holy of Holies. The creation of the world was said to have begun at the site of that stone, and it was believed that the prophesied living waters would spring from it [4,5]. Just as Jesus identified Himself with the temple in John 7:37-38, He also identified Himself with its foundation stone. He was the pierced rock from which living waters would flow (Ps. 78:20; John 19:34), the stone that would be rejected and become the chief cornerstone (Ps. 118:22-23; Matt. 21:42, I Peter 2:7).

Jesus' words on that last day of the Feast were remarkable. So, too, was the way in which he delivered those words. It was typical for Jewish teachers in those days to instruct their disciples from a seated position. By standing up and speaking in a loud voice (John 7:37), Jesus indicated that he was making an important announcement [6].

It is no wonder that Jesus' listeners marveled at what he said! In the brief statement recorded in John 7:37-38, Jesus revealed himself as the embodiment of all the prayers, hopes and longings that were part of the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles in first-century Jerusalem.

As we celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles today, awaiting the glorious return of our Messiah, we can think each year about this wonderful symbolism and give thanks for what it means in our lives. As we strive daily to advance His Kingdom, we can be renewed and empowered by the living waters of the Spirit which he offers to us freely.

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[New Horizons magazine \(www.cgom.org/articles\)](http://www.cgom.org/articles):

The Closing Day—the eighth day of the festival—represents that time. Eternity.

ETERNITY: the closing of man's day

The symbolism of the eighth day of the autumn festival focuses on eternity - God's 'end game'.

The number 'eight' - mentioned eighty times in Scripture - is associated with new beginnings, a new order. Examples are the 'eighth day' - the first day of a new week. Jesus, following his resurrection at the beginning of the eighth day, Sunday, presented himself before the Father on that day in his new spirit body. Eight persons survived the Great Flood to enter the new world. God's people were covenanted through circumcision on the eighth day of life. Even in physics - for the eighth note on a musical scale is the same as the first note, etc.

Within Judaism, this eighth day - following the seven days of Tabernacles - is 'a festival in itself'. It is a time of exuberant jubilation - a [veritable marriage feast](#). "...it is this day which above all expresses the joy of the Jewish religion" (*Teach Yourself Judaism* p.188).

This eighth day is called 'a day of restraint' (Nehemiah 8:18, KJV margin), but known as the 'closing day' (see LXX). It represents the culmination of God's plan for man. We begin, formed from earth's elements in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26), as 'clay models' of what God wants us to become.

Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible (by Jameson, Fausett and Brown):

This is one of the very few commentaries referring the great day of the feast to the 8th day. The website http://www.bible-history.com/backd2/great_day_of_the_feast.html agrees with this position:

37-39. [the last day, that great day of the feast--the eighth](#) (Le 23:39). It was a sabbath, the last feast day of the year, and distinguished by very remarkable ceremonies. "The generally joyous character of this feast broke out on this day into loud jubilation, particularly at the solemn moment when the priest, as was done on every day of this festival, brought forth, in golden vessels, water from the stream of Siloah, which flowed under the temple-mountain, and solemnly poured it upon the altar. Then the words of [Isa 12:3](#) were sung, *With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of Salvation*, and thus the symbolical reference of this act, intimated in [Joh 7:39](#), was expressed" [OLSHAUSEN]. So ecstatic was the joy with which this ceremony was performed--accompanied with sound of trumpets--that it used to be said, "Whoever had not witnessed it had never seen rejoicing at all" [LIGHTFOOT].

Jesus stood--On this high occasion, then, He who had already drawn all eyes upon Him by His supernatural power and unrivalled teaching--"JESUS stood," probably in some elevated position.

and cried--as if making proclamation in the audience of all the people.

If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink!--What an offer! The deepest cravings of the human spirit are here, as in the Old Testament, expressed by the figure of "*thirst*," and the eternal satisfaction of them by "*drinking*." To the woman of Samaria He had said almost the same thing, and in the same terms ([Joh 4:13, 14](#)). But what to her was simply affirmed to her as a *fact*, is here turned into a world-wide *proclamation*; and whereas there, the *gift* by Him of the living water is the most prominent idea--in contrast with her hesitation to give Him the perishable water of Jacob's well--here, the prominence is given to *Himself* as the Well spring of all satisfaction. He had in Galilee invited all the WEARY AND HEAVY-LADEN of the human family to come under His wing and they should find REST ([Mt 11:28](#)), which is just the same deep want, and the same profound relief of it, under another and equally grateful figure. He had in the synagogue of

Capernaum (Joh 6:36) announced Himself, in every variety of form, as "the BREAD of Life," and as both able and authorized to appease the "HUNGER," and quench the "THIRST," of all that apply to Him. There is, and there can be, nothing beyond that here. But what was on all those occasions uttered in private, or addressed to a provincial audience, is here sounded forth in the streets of the great religious metropolis, and in language of surpassing majesty, simplicity, and grace. *It is just Jehovah's ancient proclamation now sounding forth through human flesh*, "HO, EVERY ONE THAT THIRSTETH, COME YE TO THE WATERS, AND HE THAT HATH NO MONEY!" &c. (Isa 55:1). In this light we have but two alternatives; either to say with Caiaphas of Him that uttered such words, "*He is guilty of death*," or falling down before Him to exclaim with Thomas, " MY LORD AND MY GOD!"

38. as the scripture hath said--These words belong to what follows, "Out of his belly, as the scripture hath said, shall flow," &c. referring not to any particular passage, but to such as Isa 58:11; Joe 3:18; Zec 14:8; Eze 47:1-12; in most of which the idea is that of waters issuing from beneath the temple, to which our Lord compares Himself and those who believe in Him.

out of his belly--that is, his inner man, his soul, as in Pr 20:27.

rivers of living water--(See on Joh 4:13). It refers primarily to the *copiousness*, but indirectly also to the *diffusiveness*, of this living water to the good of others.

October 1997 Jews for Jesus Newsletter

(www.jewsforjesus.org/publications/newsletter/1997_10/feastoftabernacles):

Theme	Sukkot in NT Times	Jesus' Words	Future Fulfillment
Light	In the Temple area, four enormous candelabra were lit and a procession of worshipers carried smaller torches. This beautiful ceremony of light within the court of the women illumined the entire city of Jerusalem.	It was at this time that Jesus announced in the Temple area, "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.	"The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it" (Revelation 21:23-24).
Water	The water pouring ceremony at the altar each day was accompanied by recitation of the Great Hallel (Psalms 113-118). The "last great day," "Hoshana Rabbah" was either the 7th day or the 8th day. The ceremonies served part of a prayer to God for rain.	"On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus 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.' But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive" (John 7:37-39a).	"And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:1-2); see also Rev. 22:4-5.
God's Dwelling	Jewish people constructed booths (sukkot) and lived in them for a week to symbolize God's protection and presence during the wilderness travels. For the biblical idea of "protection, divine presence," see Lev. 23:43; Ps. 27:5; Ps. 31:20. See also the messianic passage in Zechariah 14:16. In the time of Christ, the symbolism of bringing the nations to the worship of God was also prominent.	"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory..." (John 1:14). Like the glory that filled the Old Testament tabernacle, Messiah's incarnation and dwelling among us shows His glory--one that believing Jews and believing Gentiles will experience forever in heaven.	"And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God'" (Revelation 21:3); see also Rev. 22:17.

The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction With Commentary and Notes by C. K. Barrett:

CONTROVERSY IN JERUSALEM

7.14-52

Sanders and Brown, this view seems improbable. See the note on 12.20, and *Judaism*, 11-14.

37. ἐν δὲ τῇ ἑσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ μεγάλῃ τῆς ἑορτῆς. Or: the feast of Tabernacles and its duration see on v. 2. The question that arises here is whether by 'the last day' John means the seventh and final day of the feast itself, or the eighth day, that of the *עצרת*, or closing festival. On this day the *sukkah* (booth, or tabernacle) itself was taken down, the *Hallel* was recited and the rejoicing continued (*Sukkah* 4.1,8, see below). In favour of the seventh day it has been argued that (i) there is no sufficient ground for calling the eighth day (not strictly part of the feast at all) the 'great day' of the feast, and (ii) the rites of libation and lights (see below on 7.38; 8.12) seem to have ceased on or before the seventh day (see *Sukkah* 4.1, and 5.1 with Danby's note). For the eighth day it may be urged (i) The eighth day was a rest day (like a Sabbath) with special sacrifices (*Sukkah* 5.6). It was held in honour: *Sukkah* 4.8, 'The *Hallel* and the Rejoicing, eight days' [a reference to 4.1]—this is to teach us that a man is bound to recite the *Hallel* and observe the Rejoicing and give the honour [due to the Feast] on the last Festival-day [the eighth day] of the Feast as on all other days of the Feast. (ii) Josephus speaks of Tabernacles as an eight-day festival (*Ant.* III, 245, ἐφ' ἡμέρας ὀκτὼ ἑορτὴν ἄγοντας, 247). (iii) Jesus' sayings about water and light may not have been suggested by the festival ritual; and if they were there is no reason why Jesus should not have proclaimed the *true* water and light after the merely symbolic water and light had been withdrawn from the Temple. On the whole it seems that a better case can be made for the eighth day; but it is doubtful whether John was deeply concerned about the matter and possible that he was quite unaware of the question raised by his words.

εἰστήκει. See on 1.35. A public proclamation rather than conventional teaching is suggested.

ἔκραξεν. ἔκραζεν (K D Θ), the imperfect, seems less apt, and may well be right.

37b, 38. The punctuation of the words ascribed to Jesus is uncertain. (i) We may (with Nestle) place a stop after πινέτω, and a comma after εἰς ἐμέ. The phrase ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμέ is then a *nominativus pendens* (see Introduction, p. 10, and cf. 6.39; 8.45; 15.2; 17.2), resumed in αὐτοῦ. The rivers of living water flow out of the belly of the believer, and to this the 'scripture' refers. (ii) We may (as e.g. Bultmann, 303, on account of the difficulty of finding an Old Testament text to satisfy (i), and the rhythm of the clause) place a comma after πρὸς με and a stop after εἰς ἐμέ. This gives a couplet in parallelism: If any man thirst let him come to me/He that believes on me, let him drink. The reference to Scripture, καθὼς εἶπεν ἡ γραφή, may now be applied either to what precedes or to what follows; and in ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας αὐτοῦ the pronoun may refer to Christ or to the believer. It is not easy to decide between these complicated alternatives. Each yields not merely sense but Johannine sense (Hoskyns, 365-9). The question is made more difficult by the problem raised by the words καθὼς εἶπεν ἡ γραφή. ἡ γραφή (singular) generally refers to a particular passage of the Old Testament, but this quotation cannot be located with confidence (see *J.T.S.* old series 48 (1947), 156; and below). We cannot therefore say with certainty whether ἐάν τις . . . εἰς ἐμέ or ποταμοὶ . . . ζῶντος forms the quotation, and cannot

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