

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

חג סוכות

by Avram Yehoshua

[THE SEED OF ABRAHAM](#)

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The Feast of Tabernacles¹ (or Booths) commemorates the time that Israel was in the Wilderness with God, dwelling or tabernacling in tents made of branches and leaves and that God provided for her daily needs for food and water, for forty years with no land to farm on and no groceries stores around. The feast is known by a number of different names in Scripture, one of which is the Feast of Ingathering. This refers to its agricultural aspect once Israel came into Canaan and had farms. The Feast of Ingathering is the last of the three harvests of the year: spring, summer and autumn, and it's the greatest harvest.

It's also called the Festival of Yahveh, or just 'the Feast' (or 'the Festival').² It's listed in a number of places in the *Tanach* (the Hebrew Bible without the New Covenant, i.e., the Old Testament):

1st Kings 8:2: 'All the men of Israel assembled themselves to King Solomon at *the Feast*, in the month *Aetanim*, which is the seventh month.' (It's in the 7th Hebrew month that the Feast of Tabernacles occurs, corresponding to October.)

2nd Chr. 5:3: 'All the men of Israel assembled themselves to the King at *the Feast* that is in the seventh month.' (See also 1st Kings 8:65; 2nd Chron. 7:8)

So, it's not surprising that it's called *the Feast* by John the Apostle: 'Now *the Feast* of the Jews was near, the Feast of Tabernacles' (Jn. 7:2). It wasn't just any feast that John was speaking of, but the Feast of Tabernacles. This is brought out in the Greek with the article *the* in front of Feast, instead of referring to it as 'a feast of the Jews.'

Yeshua would use two traditional ceremonies of the Feast of Tabernacles to reveal both His deity and His desire to sustain, provide and nurture Israel, as His Father and He had done in the Wilderness. These are the Water Ceremony and the nightly lighting of the large Lampstands, only done at Tabernacles.

The three main holy times of Yahveh are *Pesach*, *Shavu'ot* and *Sukote* (Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles; which take place in the spring, summer and fall, respectively):

Pesach pictures the death of the lamb that God used to free Israel from Egyptian slavery, and the death of Yeshua, the Lamb of God, that freed Israel from sin, Satan and eternal death to purity and eternal life. The barley harvest is associated with this holy time.

Shavu'ot pictures Yahveh giving the Ten Commandments from Mt. Sinai, and on the same day, 1,470 years later, the promised Holy Spirit to Israel (Ezekiel 36:24-27; Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:1f.). The wheat harvest is associated with this holy day.

Sukote commemorates the 40 years that Israel wandered in the Wilderness when Yahveh fed, sustained their clothing, and was a shelter for them. *Sukote* is the final and greatest harvest of the year. It speaks of Yahveh's provision and shelter for us in the Wilderness of

¹ The Hebrew for The Feast of Tabernacles תַּג סֻכּוֹת is pronounced *Hag Sukote*.

² Geoffrey Wigoder, Editor in Chief, *The New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia*, 7th Edition (New York-Oxford: Facts on File, 1990), p. 893. Cf. Ezk. 45:25.

this world, and of us being the Harvest of the Lord at the End of Time (Rev. 14:15-19).

The Hebrew *Sukote* סֻכּוֹת (plural for *suka* סֻכָּה) signifies dwellings, booths or huts made by interweaving branches and leaves together. Every year Yahveh commands Israel to dwell in these make-shift ‘tents’ to remember that He is their Provider and Shelter in the Wilderness, and that our life in this world is only temporary; that is to say, one day we will put on immortality and dwell in His House forever.

Once a year ancient Israel exchanged the security of their permanent homes for the frailty of a *suka*, a booth or temporary dwelling place. The concept that God was conveying to His Beloved was that they shouldn’t put their *trust* in material possessions that offer no real security ‘for tomorrow.’ Only by allowing God to be our *suka* (protective covering; our dwelling place; Ps. 91) is one really secure.

In 2nd Peter 1:13-14, the chief Apostle tells us that he regards our existence now as a type of temporary tent or *suka*. When we are glorified we’ll exchange our transient existence here for the permanence of our glorified bodies:³

‘Yes, I think it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle (tent/*suka*) to stir you up by putting you in remembrance, knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Yeshua haMashiah has showed me.’ (2nd Peter 1:13-14)

The Feast of Tabernacles has two distinct themes: the historical–theological, which means that it really happened: the Sons of Israel actually dwelt in *sukote* in the Wilderness for 40 years; and the agricultural, commemorating the final harvest of the season and its prophetic significance.

THE FEAST

The Feast of Tabernacles, known also as the Feast, is the last of the annual Feasts of Israel. I’ve *italicized* the Feast’s special features from Lev. 23:33-36; 39-43:

“Again Yahveh spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the Sons of Israel, saying, ‘On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the Feast of Tabernacles *for seven days to Yahveh*. On the first day is a holy assembly—you must do no labor of any kind. For seven days you must present an offering by fire to Yahveh. *On the eighth day* you must have a holy assembly and present an offering by fire to Yahveh. It is a Sabbath assembly. You must do no work!’” (Lev. 23:33-36)

‘On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, *when you have gathered in the crops of the Land*, you must celebrate the *Feast of Yahveh* for seven days, with a Sabbath rest on the first day and a Sabbath rest on the eighth day. Now, on the first day you shall take for yourselves *the foliage of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook*, and *you must rejoice before Yahveh your God for seven days*. You must celebrate it as a Feast to Yahveh for seven days in the year. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations. You must celebrate it in the seventh month.’ (Lev. 23:39-41)

‘*You must live in booths for seven days. All the native-born in Israel must live in booths*, so that your generations may know *that I had the Sons of Israel to live in booths when I brought them out from the land of Egypt*. I am Yahveh your God!’ (Lev. 23:42-43)

The Feast of Tabernacles, like all the Feasts of Yahveh, are not vacations or holidays in the secular sense. They are holy times of assembly unto God to meet Him and to rejoice in His presence for the things that

³ See [Salvation—The Promise!](#) for the Gift of God that awaits us.

He has done for us.

The three major feasts are feasts to Yahveh.⁴ He brought Israel out of Egyptian slavery and made them to dwell in booths (Lev. 23:42-43). The reenactment of the booths is meant to drive that point home. It's truly a divine cause for holy celebration. Tabernacles is one of God's 'holy vacations,' which means that we worship Him, rejoice before Him (Lev. 23:40) and feast!

One of the strange things about the Feast is that although it's only for seven days, the day after it ends is called the eighth day and it's an annual Sabbath. In Dt. 16:14, Yahveh commands, 'we must rejoice' or literally, that 'you will be filled with joy' as you celebrate *Sukote*. The reasons for both the seven day feast of *Pesach* and *Sukote* is to express the Joy that Yahveh has given us for what He has done. He's freed us from slavery; is our shelter and provides for us, both in the natural and in the spiritual realms. *Every six months* we are to disengage from the world and rejoice for seven days before Yahveh with others who have been freed. This is part of the Joy of walking in the Law of Moses. As a side point, it's often heard that 'no one can keep the Law!' So, this is their reason for not keeping any of it, but to celebrate this wonderful time that was given to us by God is to see that there are many things about God's Law that most believers don't realize. All they've been told is that the Law is slavery.⁵

The Feast begins on day 15 of the 7th Hebrew or biblical month. This day is an annual Sabbath. No work is to be done of any kind, except food preparation for the day.⁶ It's a day to rejoice before the Lord. Israel had gathered its crops and was now able to rest after her labor and thank Him who had given her the crops.

The use of the foliage and palms branches speak of the kind of tents they would be dwelling in. These booths or huts were to be a living picture to their sons and daughters that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had caused them to live that way after their freedom from slavery. In other words, He was their true Shelter and their Provision in the Wilderness, and He would be their Shelter and Provision in the Land that He had given to them, as they obeyed His voice (i.e. His commandments and statutes, etc., cf. Lev. 26:1ff.).

The Wilderness is a picture of this life that we are currently going through, and the fact that Israel refused to believe Yahveh, that He would defeat the giants in the Land (Num. 14), is a picture of us coming to Yeshua, being delivered out of Satan's Kingdom, but still needing to learn the lesson of death to self in the Wilderness of this world in order to enter into the realm where all the promises of God are, 'Yes,' and 'Amen!' (2nd Cor. 1:20). We are to believe Him that He will transform our souls during this lifetime and the next (2nd Cor. 3:18; Philippians 3:20-21).⁷ All Israel over 20, fit for war (603,550, Num. 1:46; not counting the Levites) died in the Wilderness because of unbelief. All except Joshua and Caleb. We, like Israel, need to be humbled and learn that Man doesn't live by bread alone, but by *every Word* that comes from the mouth of Yahveh (Dt. 8:1-3), that we might be able to fight the giants of our soul, which was prefigured in Joshua leading Israel into Canaan and conquering it.

It would be the sons of the ones brought out from Egypt who believed God and entered into the Promised Land. Not for a vacation, but to fight for every city in the Land and totally destroy the wicked pagan inhabitants. Each pagan people in the land of Canaan (the Amorites and Canaanites, etc.), represent a carnal reality of ours (i.e., each tribe's name reveals a fallen, dominant, carnal Adamic trait, like pride or human

⁴ Lev. 23: 34, 39 41, also 23:6; Num 28:17; Dt. 16:10, etc.

⁵ To understand why the Law isn't slavery, but just the opposite, freedom, see [Pentecost—Shavu'ot, Grace, Holiness and the Pharisaic Church, Law 102, Law and Grace, No Longer Under the Law?, Seven Ways Yeshua Fulfilled the Law, Take the Quiz! Five Quick Questions about the New Testament, and The Feasts of Israel as Time Markers After the Resurrection.](#)

⁶ This principle is taken from Ex. 12:16 where God allows food preparation for the first and seventh days of Passover, which are also annual Sabbaths.

⁷ See [Salvation—The Promise!](#) for what awaits us.

compassion, etc.). When we have died to self and become alive unto Messiah Yeshua we're able to conquer those spiritual strongholds within us, in the name of Yeshua.⁸

The fire sacrifices for the Feast (Lev. 23:36; Num. 29:12-38) symbolize our dealing with sin in our life by dying to self 'in the Holy Spirit,' and totally re-consecrating ourselves to the King of Kings.

THE POOL OF MESSIAH

The Rabbis of old said, 'If you haven't seen Jerusalem at *Sukote*, you don't know what joy is.' In Yeshua's time, a million Jews would come to Jerusalem and dwell in tents. They would come from all of Israel (Judah and Galilee at that time) and also from all the nations where God had dispersed us (Acts 2:5-11). It must have been quite a sight. The Temple of Yahveh was their central focus and meeting place.

At the Temple there were two traditional (not biblical) Jewish ceremonies of the Feast of Tabernacles that Yeshua alluded to. They were the Water and Lampstand ceremonies. The Water Ceremony was done for 7 days (not 8 days). The 7th day was known as the Great Hosana (Lord! Save us!). These shouts of *hoshiana* (Hebrew) was Israel crying out to Yahveh to save them—it was specifically a cry for the Messiah to come.

The Bronze Altar of Sacrifice in the Temple was overshadowed by a canopy of branches to make it look like a *suka*. A priest would take a gold pitcher and go to the Pool of Siloam to get water. Siloam means 'sent one' and refers to the Messiah as the Sent One of Yahveh. The pool was named for the coming Messiah. The Greek word is 'apostle.' It means 'sent one.' When Yeshua told the blind man to wash in the waters of Siloam (Jn. 9:7, 11) he washed in the waters of the Sent One. The Hebrew for the pool is *ha'Shilo'ach* הַשִּׁלּוֹחַ, which literally means 'the Sent One.' This is a biblical title for the Messiah and one that Yeshua used of Himself more than 30 times in the book of John. Some examples of this are:

1. 'For He whom God has *sent* speaks the Words of God, for He gives the Spirit without measure.' (John 3:34)
2. "Yeshua said to them, 'My food is to do the Will of Him who *sent* Me and to accomplish His Work.'" (Jn. 4:34)
3. 'so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who *sent* Him. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My Word and believes Him who *sent* Me has Eternal Life and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.' (Jn. 5:23-24)
4. 'I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear I judge and My judgment is just because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who *sent* Me.' (Jn. 5:30)
5. 'But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John. For the Works which the Father has given Me to accomplish, the very works that I do testify about Me, that the Father has *sent* Me.' (Jn. 5:36)
6. 'Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the Works themselves.' (Jn. 14:11)

The last two refer back to Numbers 14:11 and rebellious Israel in the Wilderness:

"Yahveh said to Moses, 'How long will this people despise Me?! How long will they not believe in Me, despite all the signs which I have performed in their midst?!'"

⁸ See [The Seven Tribes of Canaan](#) for more on how the different tribes living in Canaan typify the Adamic nature.

Yeshua was saying the same thing. With all the miracles (works) that He did, many people were still fickle concerning Him being the Messiah.

7. ‘And the Father who *sent* Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His Voice at any time, nor seen His form. You do not have His Word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He *sent*.’ (Jn. 5:37-38)
8. “Yeshua answered and said to them, ‘This is the Work of God—that you believe in Him whom He has *sent*.’” (Jn. 6:29)
9. ‘For I have come down from the Heavens, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who *sent* Me. This is the will of Him who *sent* Me, that of all that He has given Me, I lose none, but raise them up on the Last Day.’ (Jn. 6:38-39)
10. ‘No one can come to Me unless the Father who *sent* Me draws him, and I will raise him up on the Last Day.’ (Jn. 6:44)
11. ‘As the living Father *sent* Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me.’ (Jn. 6:57)
12. “So Yeshua answered them and said, ‘My teaching is not Mine, but His who *sent* Me.’” (John 7:16)
13. “Then Yeshua cried out in the Temple, teaching and saying, ‘You both know Me and know where I am from, and I have not come of Myself, but He who *sent* Me is true, whom you do not know. I know Him because I am from Him and He *sent* Me.’” (John 7:28-29)
14. “Therefore, Yeshua said, ‘For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who *sent* Me.’” (John 7:33)

Another powerful reference that Yeshua was pointing to when He spoke of being sent by the Father was the greatest prototype of the Messiah—Moses. God says to him,

‘Come, and I will *send* you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the Sons of Israel, out of Egypt.’ (Exodus 3:10)

Yeshua speaking of being sent by the Father is a direct reference back to Moses, the first savior of Israel. Another place where ‘being sent’ is seen to speak of the Messiah is in the messianic passage of Deuteronomy 18:18-19. This speaks of Yahveh sending a prophet who would be *like* Moses:

‘I will raise up a prophet from among their brothers *like you* (Moses) and I will put My words in his mouth and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And it shall come to pass that whoever will not listen to My words, which he shall speak in My Name, I Myself will require it of him!’ (Dt. 18:18-19)

That Moses was a unique prophet is acknowledged by all Jews because he was the savior, prophet, first priest and Law giver. Another major point is that only Moses spoke ‘face to face’ with Yahveh (Num. 12:6-8f.). Neither Father Abraham, non Isaiah, nor Elijah nor anyone else has ever done that. This is seen from what is written about Moses after his death:

‘Since that time no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom Yahveh knew face to face.’ (Deut. 34:10; cf. Num. 12:1f.)

Yeshua, in using the term ‘sent,’ points directly to the Prophet who would be like Moses:

15. “Yeshua said to them, ‘If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God. For I have not even come on My own initiative, but He *sent* Me.’” (John 8:42)

The Book of Hebrews literally calls Yeshua the Apostle (*the Sent One*) and High Priest of our faith (Heb. 3:1). The Pool of the Sent One (Siloam) is where the priest with the gold pitcher came on all the days of *Sukote* to get water for the ceremony. He was symbolically getting Living Waters from the Messiah (cf. Jer. 2:13; 17:13; Zech. 14:8). The Pool or Waters of Siloam and the concept of the Sent One of Yahveh is conceptually identical. If only they had been open to drawing Living Waters from the One whom the pool had been named after. Yeshua told the blind man to wash in the Pool and when he did, the Waters of the Sent One of God healed him.

THE WATER CEREMONY

As the priest with the pitcher of gold filled it with ‘the Waters of Messiah’ and approached the Temple steps, another priest with a gold pitcher filled with wine met him and together they went up the Temple steps to the Bronze Altar amid hundreds of thousands of Jews singing the Hallel (Psalms 113–118; psalms of praise to Yahveh), and waving the branches (palm, myrtle and willow) and the fruit of the land, which pictured Yahveh as both the One who gave them shelter and who provided for them. The joy was indescribable. A million hands and hearts lifted up in praise to Yahveh for what He had done in providing food and protection for Israel, both back in the Wilderness and ‘now.’

The Levites led the people in singing and playing the musical instruments of King David.⁹ The shofars (rams horns) blasted along with the trumpets, etc. Sacrifice was offered and the contents of the pitchers poured out, mingling together as they fell into the silver basin pipeline at the base of the Bronze Altar. This was an expression of thanksgiving for past, present and future rains. No rain, no food. No food, no life. Their prayers that day were for future rain. The wine mingled with the water pictured life with joy. It was a symbol of messianic hope. As Moses supplied water in the Wilderness to Israel, so Messiah would provide Living Waters for Israel. Jeremiah speaks of these Living Waters. Israel had gone after other gods, but the water of those gods was foul and putrid for Israel. It was an illusion. Worship of another god was a deception:

“‘Has a nation changed gods when they were not gods? But My people have changed their Glory for that which does not profit. Be appalled, oh Heavens at this, and shudder! Be very desolate!’ declares Yahveh. ‘For My people have committed two evils—they have forsaken Me, *the Fountain of Living Waters*, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water!’” (Jer. 2:11-13)

Isaiah also speaks of God’s Living Waters and His desire that Israel come to Him for heavenly Food. This speaks of the Body and Blood of Messiah Yeshua:

‘Listen! Everyone who thirsts, come to the Waters! And you who have no money come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why do you spend money for what is not bread and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me and eat what is good and delight yourself in abundance. Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen!, that you may live and I will make an everlasting covenant with you according to the faithful mercies shown to David...Seek Yahveh while He may be found! Call upon Him while He is near!’ (Is. 55:1-3, 6)

Into this Temple atmosphere and understanding of the water ceremony comes Yeshua on *Sukote*. The Apostle John writes that it was in the middle of *Sukote* that Yeshua went to the Temple and taught Israel:

‘Now the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was at hand’ (John 7:2), and ‘about the middle of

⁹ 1st Chron. 23:5; 2nd Chron. 7:6; 29:26-27. See also, 1st Sam. 18:6; 2nd Sam. 6:5; 1st Chron. 15:16; 16:5, 42; 2nd Chron. 5:13, etc.

the Feast Yeshua went up into the Temple and taught.’ (Jn. 7:14)

Yeshua was teaching in the Temple during *Sukote*. On the 7th day, with the background of the water ceremony in the Temple, *Yeshua proclaimed Himself to be the Messiah of Israel, the Fountain of Living Waters:*

“On the last and greatest day of *the Festival*, Yeshua stood there and cried out: ‘If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me! Let the man keep coming and keep drinking who believes in Me! As Scripture says, ‘From his innermost being shall flow *Fountains of Living Waters!*’” (Jn. 7:37-39)

We know that it was the 7th day, and not the 8th day, as the 8th day had no water ceremony. The 8th day wasn’t part of *Sukote* proper.

An arid land without water pictures a people in rebellion to Yahveh (Ps. 63:1; Is. 53:2). It speaks of a people who don’t have the water or food of Yahveh. God has given us of His Spirit that we might be used as a vessel that contains the Waters of Life, for us as well as for others who are thirsting for True knowledge of the God of Israel, and one day, the greater fulfillment of *Sukote* will come, as Rev. 22:1, 6 speak of:

‘Then he showed me *a River of the Waters of Life*, clear as crystal, coming from the Throne of God and of the Lamb,’

“Then He said to me, ‘It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End! I will give to the one who thirsts from the Spring (Fountain) of the Waters of Life *without cost!*’”

These are direct references to the food and wine, without cost, of Isaiah 55:1, and the Fountains of Living Waters in John 7:37-39. Red wine has a double meaning: sacrifice and joy. Psalm 104:15 speaks of this joy:

‘And wine, which makes man’s heart glad and olive oil to make his face glisten and bread which strengthens man’s heart.’

The color of the red wine also pictures the blood of the sacrifice. Water is equal to life. Perhaps it was this ceremony of drawing water on *Sukote* that John was alluding to when he wrote about Yeshua’s side being pierced and blood (‘wine’) water (‘life’) coming out:

‘But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified and his testimony is true. And he knows that he is telling the truth so that you also may believe.’ (Jn. 19:34-35)

The Blood and Water of Yeshua, falling upon the Earth meant that the Earth would produce a great Harvest of people filled with heavenly Joy. Adam was created from the dust of the Earth. It’s a picture of believers in Yeshua, for we are all made of the dust of the Earth. When the Blood and Water of Yeshua are in us, the Lord will have a harvest of people who have been fed and nurtured on the very Food and Drink of Heaven itself—Yeshua! (Jn. 6:55)

This is The Drawing of the Water Ceremony at *Sukote* and how Yeshua revealed Himself to be not only the Messiah, but God in the Flesh. He used the very words that Yahveh used in Jeremiah (Living Waters) to reveal His deity. Being Messiah, He is the Son (Ps. 2:2, 6-7). As the Son of Yahveh He is able to give us the Living Waters of Joy, or as Yahveh spoke through Isaiah, ‘Therefore, you will joyously draw Waters from the Springs of Salvation’ (Is. 12:3).

Israel is a dry and thirsty land (Wilderness) without the Waters of Heaven today, but that will soon change as the Rain from Heaven will descend upon her, for she has paid double for all her sins (Is. 40:1-2). The world is a Wilderness of Darkness, but God has provided Living Waters with Joy (Messiah Yeshua) for both Jew and Gentile for 2,000 years now.

THE LAMPSTANDS

In the evenings during *Sukote* there was a ceremony involving the lighting of the Lampstands in the Temple. In the days of Yeshua, 1,470 years after the Gory Cloud and the Fire on Mt. Sinai in the Wilderness, the Lampstand ceremony pictured the Fire in the Cloud by night. In the Courtyard of the Temple, high on the Temple Mount platform, four huge lampstands were placed. These were shaped in the form of a Menorah (the seven branched Lampstand in the Holy Place). These four lampstands were high enough that ladders were needed to climb to the top of them, while the pants (undergarments) of the Levitical priests served as wicks for the olive oil. All of Jerusalem and the surrounding countryside would be lit up for miles around.

This fire and light were also symbolic of Creation Light and of the Light of Salvation or Freedom. Israel was saved from the darkness of Egyptian slavery. This was seen in the ninth plague. There was thick darkness in Egypt, but light in Goshen for the Hebrews. Darkness, of course, symbolizes evil.

The Fire of God was especially seen in the *Shekinat* Yahveh, the Shekinah Glory Cloud (Pillar of Cloud by night with Fire inside it). This was the Holy Spirit and the visible Presence of the invisible God. This Glory Cloud of God guided Israel in the Wilderness for 40 years, and this is what *Sukote* harkened back to, while the lampstands symbolized God's fiery presence. This next passage is when the Tabernacle was set up for the first time, on the first day of the first month of the second year in the Wilderness:

‘Then the (Glory) Cloud covered the Tabernacle and the Glory of Yahveh filled the Tabernacle. Moses was not able to enter the Tabernacle because the Cloud had settled on it and the Glory of Yahveh filled the Tabernacle. *Throughout all their journeys*, whenever the Cloud was taken up from over the Tabernacle, the Sons of Israel would set out, but if the Cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out until the day when it was taken up. For throughout all their journeys the Cloud of Yahveh was on the Tabernacle by day and there was Fire in it by night in the sight of all the House of Israel.’ (Ex. 40:34-38; cf. 40:17)

The light in Jerusalem from the Lampstands was also a picture of God's Light of Creation, as well as His salvation, freedom, provision, shelter and guidance in the Wilderness, now going forth from Jerusalem. The Prophet Isaiah 2:3 proclaims:

“And *many peoples will come* and say, ‘Come! Let us go up to the Mountain of Yahveh, to the House of the God of Jacob! That *He may teach us concerning His Ways and that we may walk in His Paths! For the Torah (Mosaic Law) will go forth from Zion, the Word of Yahveh from Jerusalem!*’” (Is. 2:3)

Adding to this night time scene of Lampstands is the fact that hundreds of thousands of Jewish people were on the Temple Mount *holding lit torches*. It must have been an incredible setting! The torches were seen to be a reflection of the Temple light, which was God's Light being reflected through His people Israel. Into all this, on the 8th day of the Feast, Yeshua shouts,

‘I am the Light of the world! He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the Light of Life!’ (Or, the ‘Light which gives Life!’, John 8:12)

Yeshua was not only proclaiming His Messiahship, but again, His deity as God the Son. No prophet of God before Him ever said anything like that, not even Moses. No one could claim that they were the Light of the World. Here we see Yeshua declaring that He and the Father were one in nature (i.e., deity). For we know that Yahveh the Father is also the Light of the world:

‘Yahveh is my Light and my Salvation! Whom shall I fear?! Yahveh is the strength of my life! Of whom shall I be afraid?!’ (Ps. 27:1)¹⁰

The Path of Darkness

I remember a time when I had been asked to speak at a church camp-out. At the campfire, when it was dark, we could all see one another when we were sitting around the fire. We could see where to walk to get to the tents that were near, but when I left the campfire and went to the outskirts, to a trail that I knew was there from the afternoon, I was surprised. In the dark I couldn't tell a tree from the trail. It was then that the point came home to me of just how important it is to walk in the Light of Messiah in this world of darkness. If I had tried to go down that trail, a branch could have poked my eye out. I couldn't see anything. Or a wild animal might attack me without me even being aware that it was there, and all because there was no light. I saw that it was very dangerous to go anywhere in this world without His Light shining on my path: 'Your Word is a Lamp to my feet and a Light to my path.' (Ps. 119:105)

Yeshua sheds His Light on the Way or Path to the Father, in this world. *In Yeshua* we come to know the Father. He is real, compassionate and self sacrificing. Our journey to Him is lit up by Yeshua, the Light of the world. We don't have to stumble along the Path of Darkness. We can see clearly where we are going and we are able to confront anything on our Path because of Him who is the Light.

In Revelation both the Father and the Son are seen as the True Light:

'I saw no Temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its Temple, and the City has no need of the sun nor of the moon to shine on it, for the Glory of God has illumined it and its Lamp is the Lamb.' (Rev. 21:22-23)

In Rev. 7:9-17, a multitude of Gentiles are waving palm branches. This is a picture of the commandment to take branches, found in the Feast of Tabernacles, the End-Time Feast of Israel:

'Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the fruit (foliage and branches)¹¹ of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you must rejoice before Yahveh your God for seven days.' (Lev. 23:40)

The taking and the waving of the branches thanked God for giving them homes in the Wilderness, providing for them and watching over them, etc. Now, from Rev. 7, people are in the Heavens with God, thanking Him for being their Light and protection and for glorifying them. Hallelu-Yah!

Psalms 27:5 says,

'For in the day of evil He will keep me safe in His *Suka* (dwelling). In the Shelter of His Tent He will hide me.'

The 'day of evil' is the Day of Judgment. If we are 'in Yeshua' we'll be safe on that Day. The *suka* of God (Messiah Yeshua) is also the Secret Place of the Most High, as Psalm 91:1 states:

"He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of Yahveh, 'He is my refuge and my fortress!, My God, in Him I will trust!'" (Psalms 91:1-2)

Both the secret place and the shadow of the Almighty are Yeshua. We are safe in Him.

With the knowledge of the ceremonies of *Sukote*, the Feast of Tabernacles comes alive for us today and we begin to understand the profound significance of Yeshua's words in John about Living Waters. We also

¹⁰ For more on the deity of Messiah Yeshua, see [Yeshua—God the Son](#).

¹¹ C. F. Keil and Delitzsch F., *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Accordance electronic ed. 10 vols.; (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), paragraph 1756. "there can hardly be any doubt that פְּרִי עֵץ הָדָר is the generic term, and that the three names which follow specify the particular kinds of boughs. By "the fruits," therefore, we understand the shoots and branches of the trees, as well as the blossom and fruit that grew out of them." Also see [Is the Fruit of Leviticus Really An Etrog?](#) (Note that his cite of Lev. 23:20 should be 23:40.)

see how the meaning of *Sukote* has been *interwoven* throughout the Scriptures for us to see Yeshua as our Messiah. The celebration of *Sukote* has been given to us by God the Father so that we can know more about Him and remember all the things that He's done for Israel in sending His Son to be our *suka*.

THE PROPHETIC PICTURE

Sukote is *Yahveh's Feast of Thanksgiving*. In other words, the national holiday of Thanksgiving, as celebrated in the United States, Canada, and England, on different dates, is Satan's counterfeit of *Sukote*.¹² *Sukote* pictures the final agricultural harvest of Israel and the Final End Time Harvest of Yahveh on Earth, as well as the current ingathering (harvest) of Jews from all over the Earth today, to Israel. Jews from more than 100 different countries have now 'come home' to Israel (Ezk. 36:22f.).

The Final End Time Harvest for all believers will come after the Tribulation and after the Thousand Year reign of Messiah (the Feast of Trumpets—*Yom Truah*) in Jerusalem (Rev. 20:4-6; Ezk. 40-48), on the Day of Atonement; the Day of Judgment (*Yom HaKipurim*, Rev. 20:11ff). After that, Yeshua will be with His Bride at the *Sukote* table called the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7; 21:2, 9; 22:17).

Sukote lasts for seven days and so did ancient Jewish weddings. The Marriage Supper will also last 'seven days,' symbolic of the seven days of *Sukote*. It's a wedding and believers are His Bride!

The Eighth Day, a holy Sabbath, is the 'conclusion' to the honeymoon of *Sukote*. It's the end of the Wedding Week and the Beginning of Eternity as the Wife of Messiah Yeshua (Eph. 5:22-32; Rev. 21:9).

Yahveh desires His people Israel (both Jew and Gentile who love Messiah Yeshua) to celebrate *Sukote* today. The Prophet Zechariah speaks of this, and also gives a warning to those who refuse to celebrate *Sukote*:

'Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations who went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, Yahveh of Hosts, and to *celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles*.' (Zech. 14:16)

'And it will be that *whichever of the families of the Earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, Yahveh of Hosts, there will be no rain on them. If the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no rain will fall on them. It will be the plague with which Yahveh smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles...*This will be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations *who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles*.' (Zech. 14:17-19)

The Lord is very emphatic. At a time still in the future, He wants everyone on Earth to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. They will give thanks to the God of the Jews for the rain and the crops that they have received from His hand. If some nations won't, great will be their punishment. If rain doesn't fall it means there won't be any crops. It's called a famine and many people die due to the lack of food from the *harvest* because of their failure to acknowledge Yeshua, the King of Kings, in Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles. Most Christians today do not recognize the Feasts of Israel, nor do they care to, saying that the Law of Moses is done away with and they don't have to keep 'those Jewish things.' Here is Scripture that has yet to be fulfilled, which speaks of the thousand year reign of Messiah, from the Throne of His Father David (Luke 1:30-33; Rev. 22:16). In that day their pride and ignorance will give way to repentance and observance of the King's way of living out their faith in Him, and those of you who have shared the Light of the Law with them will be vindicated by your King.

¹² See [Thanksgiving Day—Pagan?](#)

JEWISH OBSERVANCE OF SUKOTE

The special event that separates this Feast from all the others is the building of the *suka*, the make-shift, hut-like structure made of branches and leaves interwoven together, and the waving of branches and fruit. These symbolized how Israel lived in the Wilderness for 40 years and God's provision for them both there and in the Promised Land—Israel.

Sukote (plural for *suka*; booths, tabernacles) can be seen all over Israel, but today they're prefab, made of metal poles and linen for the roof and sides. They're next to homes, on top of roofs, alongside restaurants, and wherever else people can put them up. Most Israelis will eat in them, although they don't obey the commandment to sleep in them (Lev. 23:42) because of the perverse rabbinic teaching that says that one doesn't have to sleep in them. Of course, ancient Israel in the Wilderness not only ate in them, but also slept in them, and the point of it is that God wants us to realize that this life is only a temporary shelter, no matter how expensive and beautiful one's home may be.

Different kinds of branches are commanded to be woven or used together to make the *suka* and the rabbinic *lulav*, coming from Lev. 23:40:

‘Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the foliage of beautiful trees, *palm branches* and *boughs of leafy trees* and *willows of the brook* and you must rejoice before *Yahveh your God* for seven days.’ (Lev. 23:40)

The branches used by the Rabbis are the palm, myrtle and willow.¹³ They bind them together, calling it a *lulav* (after their palm branch designation)¹⁴ and wave it, along with the *etrog*,¹⁵ during a ceremony in the synagogue symbolizing God's mastery over the universe. The synagogues will have special services dedicated to *Sukote* and the protection and guidance that God gave, and still gives, to Israel.

As the Eighth Day fades into history the Rabbis have devised a ‘Ninth Day’ called *Simchat Torah*. It literally means, ‘Joy of the Torah,’ and celebrates the end of the traditional Torah readings in Deuteronomy and begins the readings all over again in Genesis. This is rabbinic, that the Torah readings end and begin on this day,¹⁶ but it's the reason for *Simchat Torah*, even though the Rabbis rightly believe that the Torah was given to Israel on *Shavu'ot* (the Feast of Weeks), in the summer around mid-June, which means that their readings should either begin then, or in the first Hebrew month, when Moses led Israel out of Egypt (Exodus 12:1-2). Wikipedia states:

“*Simchat Torah*...is a celebration marking the conclusion of the annual cycle of public Torah readings and the beginning of a new cycle...In the morning, the last *parashah*¹⁷ of

¹³ Wigoder, *The New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia*, p. 893.

¹⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lulav> states that the *lulav* is ‘a ripe, green, closed frond of the date palm tree...To qualify for use as one of the’ three branches of the rabbinical ceremony, ‘the *lulav* must be ramrod straight, with whole leaves that lay closely together, and not be bent or broken at the top. The term *lulav* also refers to the *lulav* in combination with’ the two other branches (from the myrtle and willow trees) ‘that are bound together to perform’ the rabbinic good deed or *mitzva* ‘of waving the *lulav*.’

¹⁵ From <http://www.tradewindsfruit.com/etrog.htm>: An *etrog*, Hebrew for the citron, is a ‘medium to large sized bumpy yellow (or green) skinned citrus having a very acidic flavor.’ In other words, it doesn't taste good. ‘Primarily the skin is used, and the fruit plays a role in the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles. The origin of the citron is unknown, but it was the first cultivated citrus fruit, with records dating back to 4000 BC. It was a common fruit in the Mediterranean region and today is cultivated primarily in Sicily, Corsica, Crete, Greece and Israel, as well as a number of Central and South American countries.’ The Rabbis chose it for its smell. Why would anyone want a fruit that can't be eaten raw?

¹⁶ The Torah is read in the synagogue every Sabbath, section by section, so that in a year's time, Genesis through Deuteronomy has been read aloud and heard by the congregation.

Deuteronomy and the first *parashah* of Genesis are read in the synagogue. On each occasion, when the ark¹⁸ is opened, all the worshippers leave their seats to dance and sing with all the Torah scrolls in a joyous celebration...In Orthodox and Conservative communities outside Israel, *Shemini Atzeret*¹⁹ is a two-day holiday and the *Simchat Torah* festivities are observed on the second day' (i.e. the ninth day). 'The first day is referred to as *Shemini Atzeret* and the second day as *Simchat Torah*, although both days are officially *Shemini Atzeret* according to *Halakha*, and this is reflected in the liturgy. In Israel, *Shemini Atzeret* and *Simchat Torah* are celebrated on the same day. Reform congregations, even in Israel, may do likewise.'²⁰

WHY CELEBRATE SUKOTE?

The celebration of *Sukote*, as well as all the Feasts, not only honor Papa God and Messiah Yeshua for what They have done and who They are, it's commanded. It's a matter of obedience to the Lord that *Sukote* be observed. Satan's lie is that 'the Feasts and the Law were only for the Jews,' but Gentile believers are grafted into Israel (Rom. 11) and her rules are now their rules, too (Lev. 16:29; 17:15; Romans 11:11f.; Eph. 2:11f.).²¹

Sukote was an ancient and present reality in the life of Israel, as well as a future reality. It also speaks of the ongoing reality of the Son of Man and how the Feasts experientially make us knowledgeable about our God and King. Yahveh placed within each Feast a prophetic picture that points to the future for the last three autumn Feasts. We're also created 'to celebrate' things, and to worship God through His celebrations and He has given us much to celebrate about. It's interesting to note that Col. 2:17 speaks of the Feasts as signs or pictures of the *future*—what is still to come, having been written by Paul about 62 AD, 32 years after the resurrection, when the Church says the Law, and therefore the Feasts of Israel, were 'fulfilled' and done away with:

'Therefore, no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink *or in respect to a Feast or a New Moon or a Sabbath day*, things which are **a shadow of things to come**, but the substance belongs to Messiah.'

Paul speaks of the Feasts, etc., in the present tense with the Greek verb ἐστὶ *estin* (is/are). The Greek literally states that the Sabbath and Feasts, etc., '**are** a shadow of the coming things,'²² not '**were** a shadow of things to come,' as if referring back to Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. The autumn Feasts have yet to be fulfilled prophetically, almost 2,000 years after Paul wrote v. 17, and they picture Messiah's return to rule for a thousand years,²³ the Day of Judgment,²⁴ and the wedding and eternal bliss of the Bride of Messiah Yeshua.

¹⁷ *Parasha* is a section (usually a couple of chapters) of the Torah that is read each Sabbath.

¹⁸ The ark in this case is the wooden cabinet, overlaid with embroidered cloths, that houses the Torah, and other scrolls. The scrolls are taken out for the service and read from.

¹⁹ *Shemini Atzeret* means the concluding eighth day Sabbath (i.e. the day after the seven day Feast of Tabernacles).

²⁰ From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simchat_Torah.

²¹ For why the Gentile is obligated to keep all the rules of Mosaic Law that apply to him or her, see [The Feasts of Israel and the Church](#), [Have You Ever Wondered?](#) and [Why Sunday?](#)

²² Robert K. Brown and Philip W. Comfort, Translators, J. D. Douglas, Editor, *The New Greek-English Interlinear New Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1990), p. 702.

²³ See [The Feast of Trumpets](#).

²⁴ See [The Day of Atonement](#).

Paul is warning the Colossians that they shouldn't let others judge them, *to condemn them*, as to *how* they keep the Feasts and Sabbaths, etc., not if they keep them or that they shouldn't keep them. The Church, however, teaches that because Paul brings them up that he was against those things, but note well that he never mentions 'to keep Sunday, Christmas, Easter or Thanksgiving,' and especially not Halloween!, or that one can eat pig or any other unclean animal, fish, bird or reptile. Those days and ways weren't observed by Christians in Peter and Paul's day. They only came into the Church later, and that, through the Roman Catholic Church, not the Apostles. The point here is that the Christians were observing the Feasts, Sabbaths and New Moons, and Paul is wanting the Colossians to know that others shouldn't judge to condemn them as to *how* they observed the Feasts, not that they shouldn't observe them.

What Paul is fighting against in the letter to the Colossians are Colossian Gnostics who had come to believe in Christ, but were still immersed in darkness and paganism, condemning the other believers for not fasting²⁵ on those days nor eating what they prescribed, etc.

When we know and walk in the Feasts of Israel we know more about the substance and character of our Messiah and our Father; who They are and what They have done, and will do for us. Here are four reasons why we should celebrate the Feasts of Israel:

1. To obey Yahveh, which is always a blessing (Lev. 23:33-44; Num. 9:9-14; Dt. 16:13-15).
2. To follow in the footsteps of Yeshua. The Messiah observed the holy days every year of His adult life. Also, all the Apostles and Christians continued to observe *Sukote* and all the Feasts *after* the resurrection (Acts 21:20, 1st Cor. 5:6-8; Col. 2:16; Rev. 12:17).²⁶
3. To enter into the rest and 'holy celebrations' (holy vacations!) that God has given us every six months (Passover coming six months before *Sukote* and six months after *Sukote*). It's God's way of helping us to disengage from the world for times of refreshing and joy in Him. Of course, there's the one day of *Shavu'ot* (Pentecost) in the summer and also the Feast of Trumpets in the autumn.
4. To spend quality time with the Lord, family and friends, *sanctioned* by God for His people. Most Christians are trapped in Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving Day. These are pagan feasts, which were celebrated by pagans a thousand years before Christ was born in Bethlehem and shouldn't be 'offered up to Jesus' because He hasn't authorized them. These Christians don't realize that Satan is not only the Master Counterfeiter, but a poor one at that. These pagan feasts are only one day. Passover and *Sukote* are seven days. *Sukote* thanks God for the fall harvest. What are Christians thanking God for the fall harvest on 'Thanksgiving Day'? It's not authorized by God in the Bible, but it is found among all the ancient pagan religions as a feast to their gods. (No, the Pilgrims weren't the first to celebrate it.)²⁷

These four points are godly reasons for celebrating God's holy time of *Sukote* and all His Feasts. As we enter into the reality of this Feast we find Him and ourselves in a way that no other Feast can bring to us. For in this Feast we come to sense the Lord dwelling or tabernacling (*suka*) with us. Our sense of His protection and provision is made evident in our time with Him and what He has created this Feast for—His people Israel, both before and *after* the Resurrection. Isn't He Wonder-Full?!

Sukote is a *living* reminder of God's gracious deliverance of Israel from Egyptian slavery and His provi-

²⁵ This is brought out with Paul speaking of their 'self imposed religion' and 'neglect of the body' (Col. 2:23), and their worship of angles (Col. 2:23). Also, Gnosticism taught the need for angelic intermediaries that must be gone through in order 'to reach' the transcendent God (Col. 1:15f.)

²⁶ See [Grace, Holiness and the Pharisaic Church](#) and [The Feasts of Israel as Time Markers After the Resurrection](#).

²⁷ See [Thanksgiving Day—Pagan?](#), for why it's pagan and not for Christians and also, the Christian classic, [The Two Babylons—The Full Hislop](#).

sion in the Wilderness for her, in spite of her carnal and repugnant attitude toward Him. As we enter the *suka* we are reminded of that and we also realize God's gracious deliverance and provision for us as we wander in the Wilderness of this World, and are less than gracious attitudes toward Him at times.

Israel rebelled against Yahveh. His ways weren't their ways, and it's a teaching for us, too (1st Cor. 10:1f.). We have to die to self in the Wilderness that 'a new generation' can be raised up that will believe God and His word of bringing us into the Promised Land (of making us like Yeshua), which means death to self—that He would increase in us as we decrease. It involves total consecration to our Lord and Savior, as symbolically pictured in most of Israel dying in the Wilderness, with a new generation that would believe in Him for the land being raised up in those 40 years, and also, in the daily sacrifices for the Feast (Num. 29:12-38).

Is God really our dwelling place in this world (Ps. 90:1)? Is He really enough for us or do we crave the 'garlic, leeks and onions' of our former slavery to Satan? Is He really enough or do we cringe in fear and refuse to believe because of the giants who inhabit the Land of blessing that God wants to give us? (Our very soul made like Messiah's!) As we lie down in the *suka* and become one with ancient Israel in the Wilderness, including Yeshua who celebrated *Sukote*, may we come to see our cravings and fears that block us from going on with God, confess our sins and determine, with His Spirit, to follow Yeshua in *all* things.

Praise God for His Spirit of tenderness and power that enables us to be Born Again, filled with His Spirit and become one with Messiah. He has overcome our obstinate nature that we might be like Him and marry Him and live with Him in His *Suka* for eternity!

HOW TO CELEBRATE SUKOTE

It's great to have a congregation of people celebrating it with you, camping out. With at least eight days, there would be special times for meetings and rejoicing and fellowship before Him. Feasting would be a big part of this as well as the study of His Word, with praise and worship. Waving the branches and the fruit before Yeshua (any good fall fruit/s will do)²⁸ as a reminder of God's provision in the Wilderness and all He did, as well as what He will do, is also part of His commandment to rejoice.

If you only have yourself and possibly some family members or friends, you might consider going to a place where you can have some relative privacy; a state park, or a backyard, and either build a *suka* there, if weather permits, or dwell in a tent or a cabin. Praise and worship the Lord. Feast and invite your neighbors and tell them what God has done for you, the least of which is that He gives you an eight day holy vacation every Fall because of what He did for ancient Israel, what He has done in Messiah for us (He dwells within us) and what He intends to do for us forever—dwelling with Him in the New Jerusalem (Isaiah 60:19-21; Rev. 21:1f.).

When Ruti and I lived in the States we would camp out with members of our congregation at a state park. Sometimes we would try different state parks and sometimes we would go to the same one year after year. It would get to be that by the time we had to leave the park we didn't want to go back to civilization! We were so 'at peace' and so very grateful for the wonderful fellowship, the study of His Word, praise and worship times, and times of peace and quiet and being with our Lord.

When making a *suka* one needs to be aware that the commandment 'to live in it' applies only to the native born in Israel (Lev. 23:42). That doesn't mean that people in the States and Europe, etc., shouldn't celebrate the Feast, but that they can determine if they should sleep out in their *suka*, or camping tent, or cab-

²⁸ Good Fall fruit can be dates, figs, pomegranates and apples, etc., which are harvested in the Fall.

ins during this time because of weather conditions. After Ruti and I realized the ‘native born’ aspect of the Feast, and it took many years before we saw this, we would rent cabins at that same state park instead of sleeping out in tents and bearing the brunt of the inclement weather that would sometimes happen during *Sukote* in Oklahoma. Israel, on the other hand, with it’s pleasant climate at *Sukote*, is ideal for sleeping out. Seems like God thinks of everything.

Why celebrate *Sukote*? Because Yahveh commands His people Israel to celebrate it, reflecting His provision, both natural and spiritual. What we eat, when we assemble, what days we celebrate as holy and what attitudes we walk in, etc., should all revolve around the God of Israel and what His Word tells us. He’s our God and He determines the Way we should walk, just as a father should determine the way his son lives. With the Blood and Spirit of Messiah Yeshua we can walk in the Holy Days, and all the other commandments that pertain to us, as Yeshua and all His Apostles did. As we keep His Ways we are proclaiming to our Father and our Lord first, that we value Them above everything and everyone else, and then to the world, that we are part of His Chosen people Israel.

Sukote is a time where Yahveh commands us to cease from our daily activities and rejoice before Him for seven (eight) days:

‘Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the foliage and fruit of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook and *you must rejoice before Yahveh your God for seven days*. You shall thus celebrate it as a Feast to Yahveh for seven days in the year. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations. You must celebrate it in the seventh month.’ (Lev. 23:40-41)

May You Sense His Dwelling within You this Sukote!

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²⁹ This article was last revised on 24 October 2018.