

Finding Simchah (Joy) in Sukkot

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Introduction:

We are now journeying through a most wonderful time called “Sukkot” or the Feast of Tabernacles which sees most dedicated Yahudim (Jews) and faithful Netzarim endeavouring to fulfil this great Mitzvot (commandment). This time includes dwelling in what is called a “Sukkah” a temporary shelter generally made if possible of natural material like bamboo, palms etc.



Also in this time there is the waving of the “Lulav” being a combination of various branches like willow, palm and myrtle with an “Etrog” being a fruit somewhat like a lemon based on the following reading:

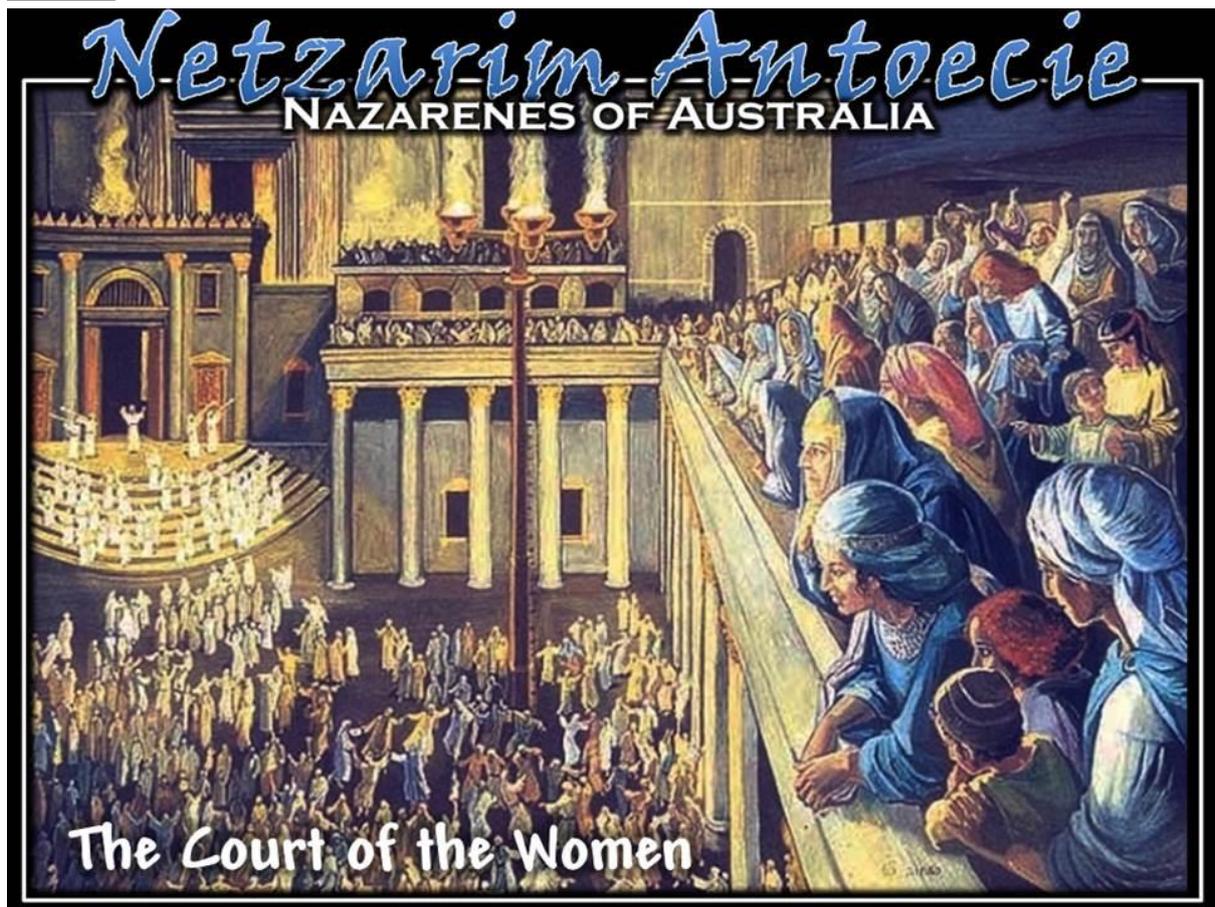
Vayiqra (Leviticus) 23:40 And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of good trees, branches of palm trees, the twigs of leafy trees, and willows of the stream; and you shall rejoice before YHWH your Elohim for seven days. ⁴¹ You shall keep it as a feast to YHWH for seven days in the year. *It shall be* a statute forever in your generations.

As we have already had much information regarding this feast it is my hope to add some further inspiration as to the further purposes that this feast and the eighth day points towards and reveals.



Shemini Atzeret & Simchat Torah:

Shemini Atzeret is an eighth day extension of the seven day Sukkot season and concludes it, and yet it is a separate festival with its own significance, although connected to it. "Shemini" means eighth, while "Atzeret" means conclusion or gathering. It comes from the Hebrew root "atzar" meaning "to hold back" or to "tarry". In that connotation it is seen as an added day to spend with Yahweh which brings the feast to a conclusion but it also prepares for the beginning of a new cycle.



On this eighth and final Day there was a gathering of all the women of Yisrael in the Court of the Women. They sang songs of rejoicing and praise, they danced before Yahweh waving banners and flags and torches. Then, they proceeded from the Temple Mount into the streets of Yerushalayim. As they danced through the streets, the city came alive with rejoicing and with the light of the flames as the procession passed by.

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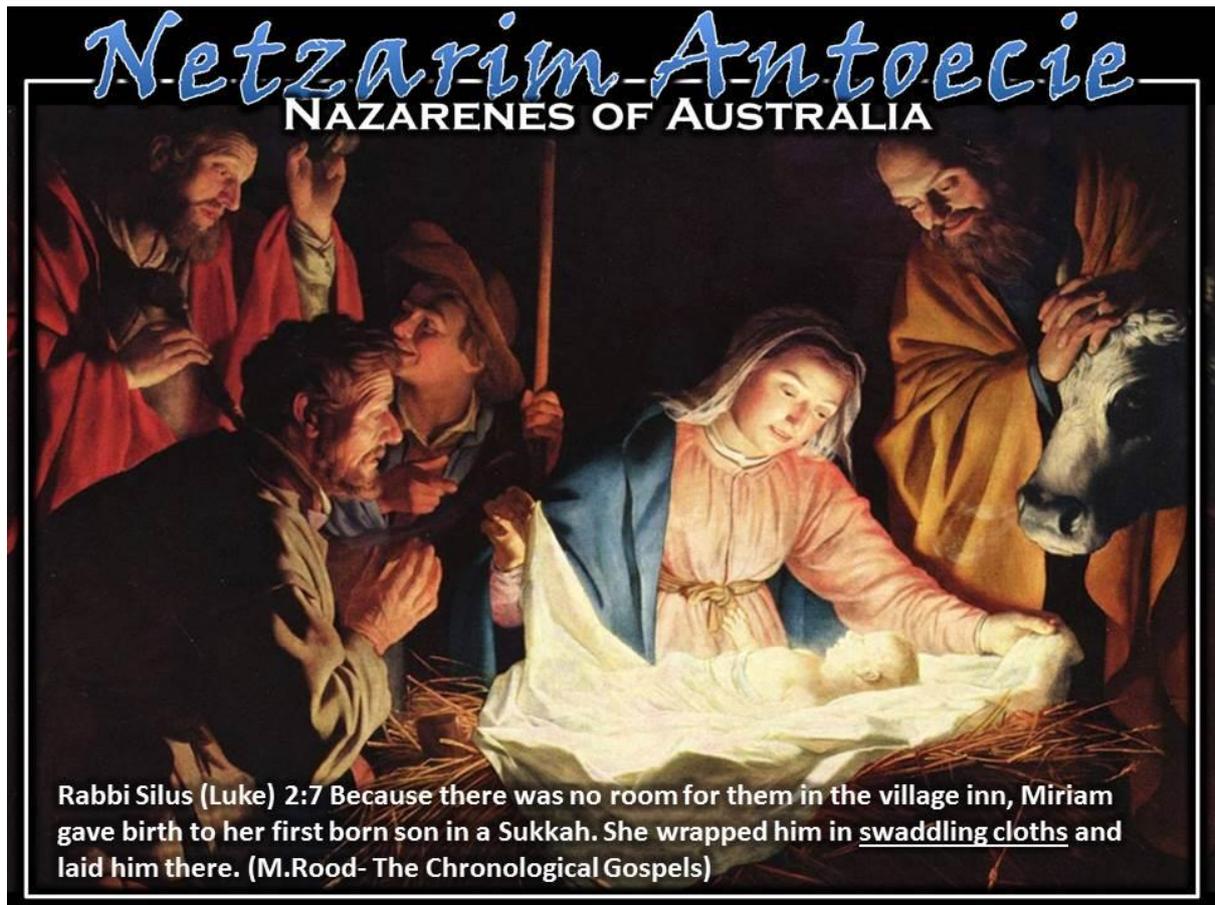


The Giant Menorah of Sukkot

- An 80 foot Menorah was erected with each branch holding 30 Gallons of fine Oil.
- Yerushalayim radiated such light that the Rabbis called it the light of the World

When they returned to the Temple Mount, in the Court of the Women, a Menorah was erected there. This menorah was 80 feet tall and had at each of the seven branches, a bath of 30 gallons of fine oil. The torches were given to the husbands of the dancers to light the Menorah. When the Menorah was lit, the entire city of Yerushalayim was awash in its glow. Because the city sits within the bowl of the hills which surround it, and because this Menorah was so high and so bright, every corner of every home in the city was alight with its radiance. The rabbis say that to see Yerushalayim in those days was to experience the Radiant Glory of Elohim that had been lost since the Shekinah (the Presence) left the first Temple. They called this the "Light of the World." So it was in this glorious setting that Yahshua proclaimed Himself as "the Light of the World" during Hanukkah (**Yochanan/ John 8:12**).

Since it was the custom to use the discarded priestly garments to make wicks for this and other Menorot and since we know that Yahshua being the light of the World was also born on the first day of Sukkot and dedicated on the eight day some interesting further insight can be gained:

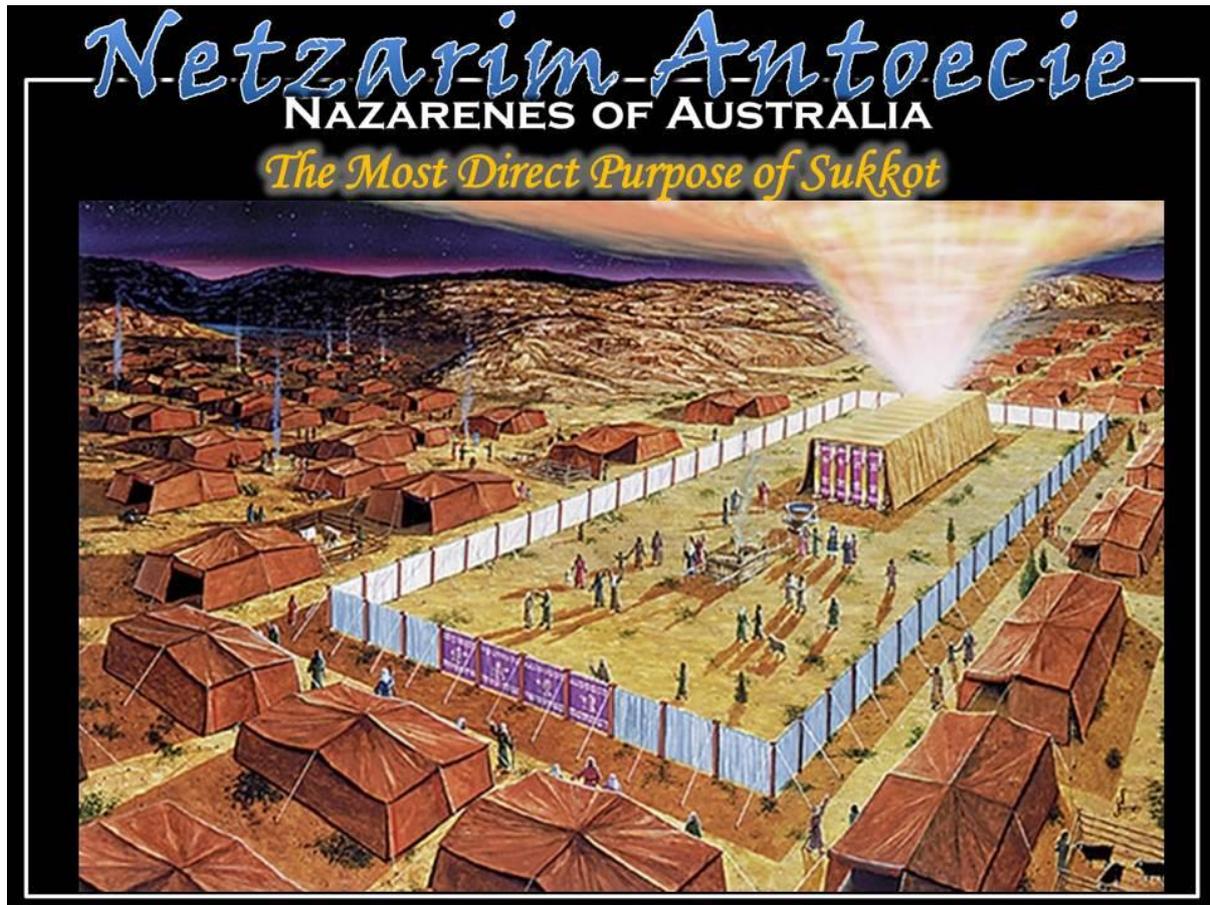


Rabbi Silus (Luke) 2:7 Because there was no room for them in the village inn, Miriam gave birth to her first born son in a Sukkah. She wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him there. (M.Rood- The Chronological Gospels)

An interesting comment is made that a child of the King and heir to the throne was washed with salt water and wrapped in swaddling cloths. The parents prayed over the child a short ceremony of dedication vowing to raise the child in an upright manner. What is striking is that used Priestly garments were recycled for the wicks in the Temple Menorah and for swaddling the sons of Kings. There is therefore little doubt that Elisheva (Elizabeth) the wife of the Cohen (the Priest) ZecharYah would have coveted the opportunity to provide the swaddling cloths for this momentous event. Also we know the Brit Milah (circumcision) of Yahshua was done on the High Sabbath on the Last Great Day.

The Most Direct Purpose of Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles):

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Since we know that Yisrael lived in tents in the wilderness then we also know a Sukkah is different being a very temporary dwelling. Why then did YHWH want his people to dwell in them for seven days? I will ask you another question to answer that. What book in the entire scriptures best brings to mind the idea of the Sukkah (a Temporary Dwelling) especially when speaking of life itself?

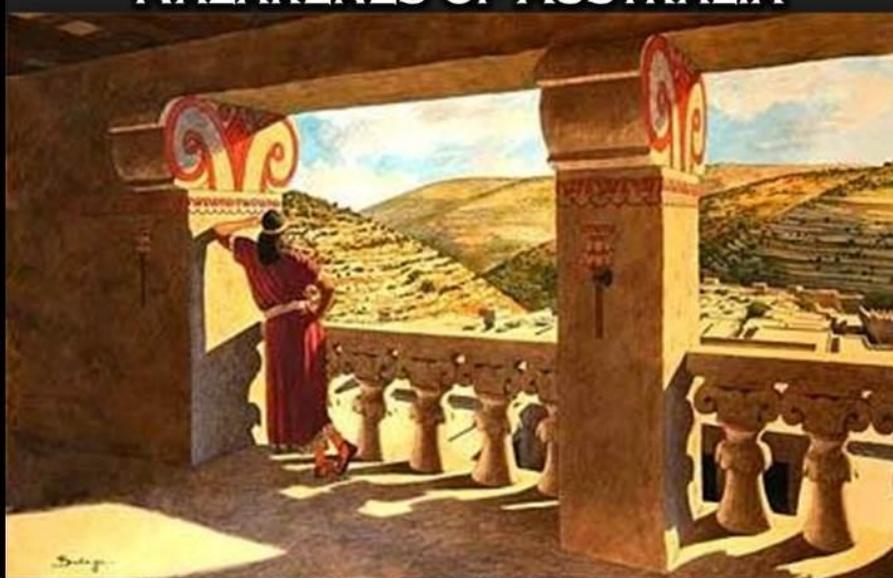
Strange as it may seem it is Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes) in that it repeats a common phrase many times to establish a unique truth:

“Futility all is futility.”

How is Sh’lomoh (Solomon) reflecting the teaching that YHWH wants to impart on the Yisraelites during this feast. It is because in his endeavour to fulfil his life and ward off the temporality of life and its inevitable end he has tried everything:

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Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes) 2:10- 11 And all that my eyes desired I *did not* keep from them. I *did not* withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart rejoiced in all my labour. And this was my portion from all my labour. 11 *But* when I looked on all the works that my hands had done and on the labour in which I had toiled, see, all was futile and grasping the wind and there was no *gain* under the sun.

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Sh'lomoh (Solomon) realized that nothing could stop the end from coming so the message of the Sukkah is that nothing we can do in this world can cause us to extend life. You came with nothing and you will leave with nothing so all achievement is futility. The Sukkah reminds us of our temporary state. However, there is also an amazing teaching that Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes) brings and that is about the understanding of Simchah (Joy) in that Sh'lomoh (Solomon) finally understands that joy is about the present moment. In fact in this book the word Simchah (Joy) is mentioned more times than in the whole Torah combined.

This is why Simchah is so relevant when we think of Sukkot and especially the Eighth day which is called Simchat Torah or Joy in the Torah since it is about the joy of the Torah that we have now & not about our entire life experiences.



It is a common sight in Yisrael to see people dancing and rejoicing since this day is not about an entire life lived in happiness but about the joy of life lived at this moment that is not subject to the past or future since all life is fleeting and temporary. Sh'lomoh (Solomon) finally discovered that he could defeat death by Simchah (Joy) in the things he had today by enjoying today and not worrying about tomorrow:



Yahshua also teaches in this way about the worries of life and how we should have faith for today:

Rabbi Silus (Luke) 12:28 If then Elohim so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more *will He clothe you, O you of little faith?*

Just as Sh'lomoh (Solomon) discovered that Simchah (Joy) of the moment was able to defeat the fact that his body was a Sukkan (a temporary dwelling) we too can overcome the anxiety of life by the simchah (Joy) of the moment and Sukkot wants us to discover that. When we sit in a rickety poorly constructed Sukkan gazing up to the heavens together with Brethren in Echad (Unity) seeking YHWH we can be filled with that overwhelming joy that will defeat the anxiety of life and by simply doing it we show YHWH that we are serious about him.

Solomon builds the Temple:

We know that Sh'lomoh (Solomon) built the Temple which was a great achievement but when David wanted to build the Beyth Ha Mikdash (Temple) what did YHWH say to him:

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Shemuel Beyth (2 Samuel) 7:4- 7 And it came to be that night that the Word of YHWH came to Nathan, saying, 5 "Go and say to My servant David, 'Thus said YHWH, "Would you build a house for Me to dwell in? 6" For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Yisra'el up from Mitsrayim (Egypt), even to this day, but have moved about in a Tent and in a Dwelling Place. 7" Wherever I have walked with all the children of Yisra'el, have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Yisra'el, whom I commanded to shepherd My people Yisra'el, saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?'

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What is so amazing is that even YHWH had no desire for a Temple as though he needed a monument to announce his greatness. He was happy to remain in the Mishkan (the Dwelling) which in all English Bibles is translated as a Tabernacle (a temporary dwelling). Even though they had this great Temple the Beyth Ha Mikdash built by Sh'lomoh (Solomon) they were not to forget that they had YHWH living in their Midst dwelling in a Sukkah a temporary dwelling called the Mishkan (the Tabernacle). You do not need great buildings of Cedar & stone to fellowship with Elohim. You can live in a portable cabin curtesy of Ikea & YHWH Elohim will be there. Why is it important that Yisrael remember the hard times they went through? It was because when a Nation forgets its struggles it becomes decadent and eventually falls as we see with all the Ancient Kingdoms. The Yahudim (Jews) have never had the luxury of feeling permanent which keeps them in a constant state of reliance on Elohim. The Memory of the Mishkan (the Tabernacle) is

enough for every Yahudim, (Jew) therefore Sukkot reminds them every year to rely on Ha Shem for another year.

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We had the Temple the Beyth Ha Mikdash twice but it is no more but the Mishkan became the symbol of YHWH's dwelling that can be anywhere, therefore it can be in the Schull (the instruction hall) or the gathering place anywhere where people gather in Echad (Unity) to seek YHWH. Based on this understanding the permanent became temporary and the temporary became permanent. Even the simplest poorest person who joins with his brethren and builds his private Sukkah is bathed in the clouds of glory. Therefore we can experience eternity in a moment of Simchah (Joy).

The Original hope & purpose of YAHWEH:

To fully grasp an understanding of the value and importance of Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles) we need once more to return to the beginning. We discovered in our teaching on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) that it reflected Man's desire to return to the presence of YHWH. What we need to understand is that from the very beginning when Adam & Chavah (Eve) were cast out of the garden it was indeed the desire of YHWH to see man re-establish fellowship with Him. The entire scriptures from front to back is about that Journey back into his presence and so we read the following about the coming of the New Yerushalayim:

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Hitgalut (Revelations) 21:22 And I saw no Beyth Ha Mikdash (Temple) therein, for YHWH Elohim El-Shaddai (the Almighty) and the Lamb are the Beyth Ha Mikdash (Temple) of it. 23 and the city had no need of the sun, nether of the moon to shine in it: for the Esteem of YHWH did lighten it and the Lamb is the light of it. 24 And the Nations shall walk in the light of it and the Kings of the Earth bring their esteem and respect into it. 25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day for there is no night there.

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From these verses we see that the desire of YHWH is not for a Beyth Ha Mikdash (Temple) since Elohim and the Lamb are the Temple but his desire is & has always been to dwell among his people.

The Many Faceted Message of Sukkot (Tabernacles):

For Yisrael Sukkot is a remembrance for them that YHWH had them dwell in tents being temporary dwellings in the Wilderness but it reminded them of so much more:

Yisrael remembers that on this Feast after they had broken the marriage Covenant through the Golden Calf incident and Mosheh had again returned up the Mountain, that atonement had been made. The 40 days before Mosheh comes back down the Mountain was a time of great repentance so upon their forgiveness Sukkot (the Feast of Tabernacles) becomes a time of "New Beginnings" so each year this becomes once more a time of joy believing in

the forgiveness and renewal for a new year but even more than that Simchat Torah (the Joy of the Torah) always brings Yisrael unrestrained joy because once again YHWH gave his Torah after the first Tablets of the 10 Covenant Words were smashed.

What then is it that Sukkot hopes for as shown in the water Libation ceremony? Yisrael believes for water to fall for an ingathering of the Harvest. However from a spiritual sense what is needed is YHWH bringing forth heavenly water:

We find Yahshua speaking of this water when he speaks to the Woman at the well when he says:

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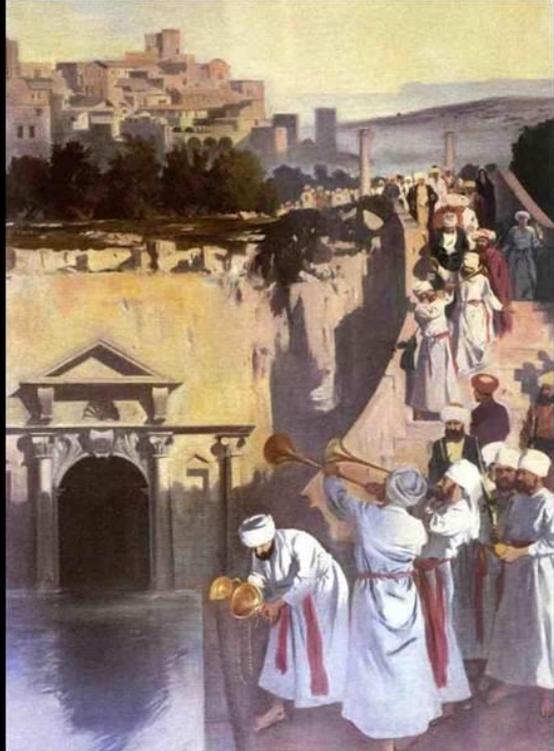
Yochanan (John) 4:14 But whoever drinks of the water (the Mayim) that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

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Again we see Yahshua coming to the Festival of Sukkot where the water Libation ceremony would take place and speaking these words that this Ceremony looked to:

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Yochanan (John) 7: 37- 39 On the last day (Simchat Torah), that great day of the feast, Yahshua stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scrolls of YHWH have said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." 39 But this He spoke concerning the RUACH (Spirit), whom those believing in Him would receive; for the RUACH Ha Kodesh (the Holy Spirit) was not yet given, because Yahshua was not yet glorified.

Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of Elohim is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Ruach Ha Kodesh (Holy Spirit).

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The true picture of Simchah (Joy) therefore is found in the promise that Yahshua gave us of the RUACH Ha Kodesh (the Holy Spirit) as Shaul (Paul) writes in:

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Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of Elohim is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Ruach Ha Kodesh (the Holy Spirit).

We also find the same picture as the water libation ceremony portrayed in the Following:

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The River of Life

Hitgalut (Revelation) 22:1 And he showed me a pure river of Water of life clear as crystal proceeding out of the throne of YHWH and of the Lamb. 2 In the middle of its street and on either side was the tree of life which bore 12 manner of fruits and yielded her fruit every month and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Hitgalut (Revelation) 22:1 And he showed me a pure river of Mayim (Water) of life clear as crystal proceeding out of the throne of YHWH and of the Lamb. 2 In the middle of its street and on either side was the tree of life which bore 12 manner of fruits and yielded her fruit every month and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Symbolically leaves refer to Torah pages so the leaves are the Word of YHWH that cause healing and rejoicing just as Simchat Torah is meant to symbolize.

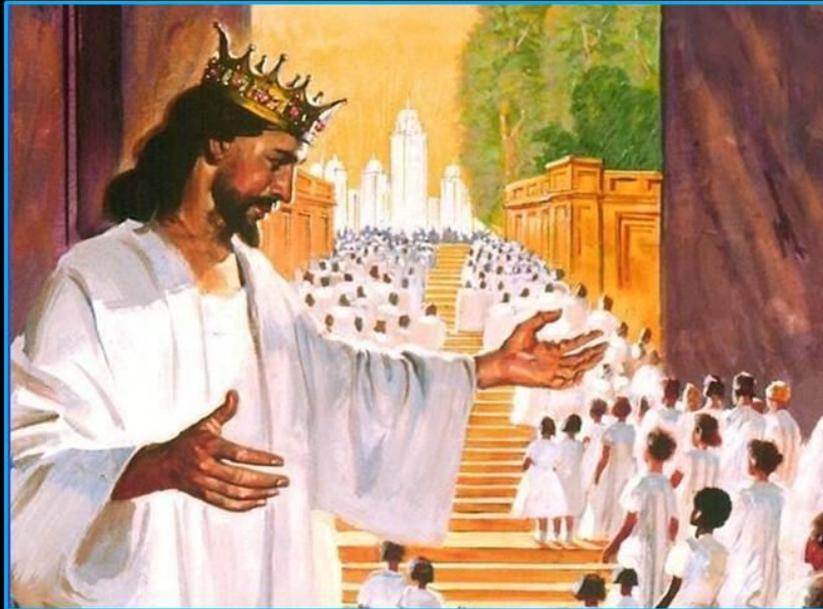
When we think of Yahshua we are reminded that he is a picture of YHWH dwelling among his people but wait he already did that when he dwelt among his people in the wilderness. Yahshua is the living Mishkan (Tabernacle) and Yochanan (John) is not using a Metaphor. If you are not sure if Sukkot is significant look at the facts:

This was the 7th Feast, occurring during the 7th Month, during the 7th full moon of the year and was to be celebrated for 7 days.

Sukkot also encompasses the entire timeline of Creation from the beginning until there is a New Heavens & Earth with each day reflecting 1000 years finishing with the thousand year reign of Moshiach (Messiah). YHWH must however separate the 8th Great day because it is when he completely wipes away the Heavens & the Earth to establish the New Heavens & the New Earth therefore it is a picture of New Beginnings.

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Hitgalut (Revelation) 19:7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready."

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Sukkot speaks in reality of the Wedding super of the Lamb. Is it a coincidence that the first Temple was completed in the seventh Month and dedicated on the Great Feast being Sukkot. This is when you dine with the King all being prophetic pictures of the future event. The eight day or Simchat Torah however speaks of the consummation of the Marriage when the Bridegroom takes his bride into the inner chamber:

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1 Corinthians 13:12 For now we see through a veil (in a glass), dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know him just as I also am known.

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Summary:

1. Sukkot has the direct purpose of remembrance of the former times when Yisrael dwelt in Tents in the wilderness and placed their lives in the hands of YHWH.
2. No matter what achievement we make our life is a temporary dwelling.
3. Yahweh has no desire for a great monument to demonstrate his greatness and can be found in a simple poorly built Sukkah where hearts are joined in search of him.
4. The true source of joy (Simchah) is found through his Ruach (Spirit) and his beloved eternal word the Torah.
5. Sukkot is an allegory of creation from its beginning to its end with "Shemini Atzeret" the eighth day representing the joy of new beginnings and a restoration of all of creation with a New Heavens and the Earth.
6. Sukkot is a picture of the Wedding feast of the Lamb while Shemini Atzeret the eighth day symbolizes the consummation of the Marriage of Moshiach (Messiah) to his Bride.

Summary:

The following should highlight some of the aspects that we can conclude in this teaching which I hope will stir some Simchah (Joy) in you all:

1. Sukkot has the direct purpose of remembrance of the former times when Yisrael dwelt in Tents in the wilderness and placed their lives in the hands of YHWH.
2. No matter what achievement we make our life is a temporary dwelling.
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Amein