



## Sukkot I

October 10, 2022

*Shalom aleichem Mispacha!* For the years of our existence as a congregation, we have had an understanding of the Festival of *Sukkot* as a picture of the coming Messianic age, a time when everything will be at peace and we will be dwelling in the physical presence of our Messiah. And our understanding has not changed. It is a time that we long for, a time when as Isaiah tells us, *6 The wolf will dwell with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the kid, the calf and the young lion and the yearling together, and a little child will lead them. 7 The cow and the bear will graze, their young ones lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like an ox. 8 A nursing child will play by a cobra's hole, and a weaned child will put his hand into a viper's den. 9 They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of ADONAI, as the waters cover the sea.* (Isaiah 11:6-9 TLV). We believe that with all of our hearts and look forward to the coming of this promised time. But where are we with regard that coming day and what are our expectations of it? And, what may happen before we reach that wonderful time?

We at *Beit Shalom* are a part of the Messianic Jewish Movement, a relatively new move of G-d. It has only been around since the mid 1960's. But as little known as it is, it is a movement which is very important in what ADONAI is doing on the earth. He has placed Messianic Judaism between two groups, traditional Judaism and Christianity. We have things in common with both groups but are misunderstood to some degree by both groups. Our purpose, a very important purpose, is to cause both groups to stop and look at themselves, look at themselves to see if ADONAI is calling for any changes. And we also have to continually look at ourselves because we are not perfect either. We humans are all very much alike. We focus on what we believe to be the truth and then refuse to budge one inch. And that's a great trait, sometimes! We must be firm in what we know is ADONAI's truth, but we must also be open to the working of the *Ruach Kodesh* in our lives as well and be willing to change where He shows us change is necessary. We in Messianic Judaism are not called to judge anyone else's practices and we don't. ADONAI is the only judge. Our purpose here in the middle, between traditional Judaism and Christianity, is to shine His light on some of His truth which has been lost and forgotten since the early centuries.

There are at least two primary reasons for the existence of Messianic Judaism at this particular time in history which I can see. One is to bring the truth to traditional Judaism that *Yeshua ben Yosef*, the Messiah pictured in the *Tanakh* as the suffering servant, has already come and will soon return. He will return as *Yeshua ben David*, the conquering king Messiah. The second is to refresh the memory of the Church that G-d's plan for the nations has not changed, that salvation is through the Jews and the Jewish Messiah and Abraham's descendants, the Jews of today, are still called to be priests to the nations. None of us is where ADONAI wishes us to be as *Yeshua's* followers. We all see through a glass darkly and our commitment and service to *Yeshua* has not yet reached the level that He wishes it to be. But, I believe that before we reach the end of the age and enter into Messiah's era of peace, we will have come much closer in not only our understanding of ADONAI's Word and what

He wishes of His people, but also much closer to Yeshua and the walk to which He has called us.

Some of the people of the three groups which I mentioned, traditional Judaism, Messianic Judaism, and Christianity, will be the people who will live in Yeshua's Kingdom in the coming age. Unfortunately, some will not. There is a very stringent requirement for being there. It is to know Yeshua intimately, to be fully embedded in Messiah. As a group, Jews will be there because they will have met their brother Yeshua the Messiah as *Sha'ul* prophesied: *26 and in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer shall come out of Zion. He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.* (Romans 11:26 TLV). And Messianic Jews and Messianic Gentiles of the present movement along with followers of Jesus in Christianity, will dwell in peace together in the coming age. But before we reach that time, we are looking forward to a great revival, a great revival which will be triggered by multitudes of Abraham's sons and daughters coming into Yeshua's Kingdom. It will be a revival which will cause many more from the nations, the Gentiles, to come into Yeshua's kingdom. We look forward to that day. How close are we? We're very close.

As we think about all these things and Scriptures and events run constantly through our minds, we must understand that our relationship with ADONAI exists on several different levels. On a personal level, we have a very warm spiritual relationship with the Father and Yeshua through the *Ruach Kodesh*, the Holy Spirit. We interact with them in our quiet times and our prayer times and experience the holy presence in our lives daily. On a congregational level, we experience love for the members of Yeshua's body, our local *mishpacha*, and we function together as a group of called out followers of Yeshua. But, we must also understand the physical workings of ADONAI's plan as He has shown us in Scripture. We must correctly understand what He is showing and telling us through His Word in order to successfully function as Yeshua's *talmidim*, His disciples, disciples who are aware of the time in which we live and able to resist *HaSatan*. If we don't understand what the Adversary is doing around us, we are unable to fight back and defeat him in the individual battles which we face daily.

While sitting on the Mount of Olives, Yeshua looked back at the City of Jerusalem and said: *20 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near. 21 Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those inside the city must get out, and those in the countryside must not enter her. 22 For these are the days of punishment, to fulfill all that has been written."* (Luke 21:20-22 TLV). He warned them, prophesying to them about a time when armies would surround the city of Jerusalem and He told them that would be the time for them to flee to the hills. And, that time came about 40 years later when Jerusalem was surrounded by the Roman army and the whole city was burned and destroyed and many Jews were killed. Continuing to tell them about that time, Yeshua said: *24 "They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away captive into all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."* (Luke 21:24 TLV). And Jerusalem was trampled, controlled, and had been controlled by the Gentiles for more than two thousand years. It had been under Gentile control from the time of the first Jewish captivity by Babylon, except for a few hundred years after captivity and under the Jewish Hasmonean dynasty, until June 7, 1967, when Israeli paratroopers occupied the old city of Jerusalem.

Colonel Motta Gur was the commander of the paratrooper unit which secured the "old city" in 1967. Their goal was the Western Wall. Here is some of the actual dialogue of that day. Colonel Motta Gur on loudspeaker: All company commanders, we're sitting right now

on the ridge of the Mount of Olives and we're seeing the Old City. Shortly we're going to go in to the Old City of Jerusalem that all generations have dreamed about. We will be the first to enter the Old City. Eitan's tanks will advance on the left and will enter the Lion's Gate. The final rendezvous will be on the open square of the Temple Mount. Yossi Ronen on the radio: Israeli tanks are at the entrance to the Old City, and we're going ahead, through the Lion's Gate. I'm with the first unit to break through into the Old City ... There is a Jordanian bus next to me, totally burnt; it is very hot here ... We're about to enter the Old City itself. We're standing below the Lion's Gate, the Gate is about to come crashing down, probably because of the previous shelling. Soldiers are taking cover next to the palm trees ... Sound of gunfire in the background. On the radio, General Narkiss asks: "Tell me, where is the Western Wall? How do we get there?" ... Colonel Motta Gur on the wireless: The Temple Mount is in our hands! I repeat, the Temple Mount is in our hands! Yossi Ronen replied: "I'm walking right now down the steps towards the Western Wall. I'm not a religious man, I never have been, but this is the Western Wall and I'm touching the stones of the Western Wall." ... The sound of soldiers reciting the *Shehechianu* is heard: *Baruch atah Hashem, elokeinu melech haolam, she-hechianu ve-kiemanu ve-hegianu la-zman ha-zeh.* [Blessed art Thou Lord God King of the Universe who has sustained us and kept us and has brought us to this day] ... Rabbi Shlomo Goren speaks: "*Baruch atah Hashem, menachem tsion u-voneh Yerushalayim.*" [Blessed are thou, who comforts Zion and builds Jerusalem] ... Soldiers are heard: *Amein!* Next to the Western Wall, the soldiers sing *HaTikvah*, Israel's national anthem. Then Rabbi Goren speaks: We're now going to recite the prayer for the fallen soldiers of this war against all of the enemies of Israel. The soldiers are heard weeping. Rabbi Goren: recites *El Male Rachamim*, G-d, Full of Compassion, a prayer for the soul of a person who has died. The soldiers are again heard weeping. Rabbi Goren sounds the *shofar*. The sound of gunfire is heard in the background. Rabbi Goren, holding a *Torah* scroll, speaks: "*Le-shana HA-ZOT be-Yerushalayim ha-b'nuya, be-yerushalayim ha-atika!*" [This year in a rebuilt Jerusalem! In the Jerusalem of old!]. In June 1967, at the very moments just described, the "times of the Gentiles" were ended and the times of the Jews returned to their ancient capitol of Jerusalem, the place where ADONAI placed His name forever.

Something else very significant also happened in the 1960's about the same time that Jerusalem was back under Jewish control. ADONAI poured out His Holy Spirit on hundreds and thousands of young men and women in a movement which started on the west coast and spread across the United States. It became known as the "Jesus Movement," and among the many young people who came to know their Messiah were hundreds and hundreds of young Jewish people. They were the raw material which ADONAI used to birth the Messianic Jewish Movement, a fiery group of "turned on" young Jews whose many different Bible groups soon began to include non-Jews as well. This was a very significant prophetic sign of the approaching of the "end of the age."

Yeshua was tempted by *HaSatan* in the wilderness after His immersion in the Jordan River. *5 And leading Him up, the devil showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in an instant. 6 And the devil said to Him, "I'll give to You all this authority along with its glory, because it has been handed over to me and I can give it to anyone I wish."* (Luke 4:5-6 TLV). *Sha'ul*, referring to *HaSatan*: *3 "And even if our Good News is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case, the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, so they might not see the light of the Good News of the glory of Messiah, who is the image of God."* (2Corinthians 4:3-4 TLV). *HaSatan* was correct in stating that he had authority over the kingdoms of the earth.

The majority of the Christian body has been taught that *HaSatan* will be bound after Yeshua returns as King and will remain in chains for a thousand years according to Revelation 20, verse 3. Then, he will be set free to deceive the nations for a little while, during the 1000 year reign of Yeshua on the earth. But is that true? Of course, we know that Revelation 20 is true, but is the way that it is being interpreted true?

We just read that *HaSatan* said that he had dominion over the empires of the world at the time of Yeshua's temptation, a dominion which he had had for eons. Yeshua did not contradict him. But when Yeshua died on the stake, *HaSatan's* dominion over the empires ended. When Yeshua came to earth to live as a man in His role as the "suffering servant Messiah," He had not been given earthly authority over a kingdom. Yeshua said: 36..., "*My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I wouldn't be handed over to the Judean leaders. But as it is, My kingdom is not from here.*" (John 18:36b TLV). But when Yeshua died on the stake and ascended to the right hand of the Father, all things were given into His hands. *Sha'ul* tells us how ADONAI's raised Yeshua from the dead to His seat of power: 20 ..."*when he worked in the Messiah to raise him from the dead and seat him at his right hand in heaven, 21 far above every ruler, authority, power, dominion or any other name that can be named either in the 'olam hazeh or in the 'olam haba. 22 Also, he has put all things under his feet and made him head over everything for the Messianic Community, 23 which is his body, the full expression of him who fills all creation.*" (Ephesians 1:20-23 TLV). This is the reality: Yeshua's Kingdom exists right now. *HaSatan* had his kingdoms until Yeshua went to the stake.

And Yeshua had already told his disciples several times about what was going to happen to *HaSatan*. 18 ..., "*I was watching satan fall like lightning from heaven.*" (Luke 10:18b TLV). That was when he and his demons were cast out of heaven. But, in John 12, Yeshua spoke about His present day: 31 "*Now is the judgment of this world! Now the prince of this world will be driven out! 32 And as I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all to Myself.*" (John 12:31-32 TLV). When Yeshua was lifted up on the stake and died, *HaSatan* was driven out! *Sha'ul* was even more specific about what happened to *HaSatan* and his henchmen: 15 *After disarming the principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in the cross.* (Colossians 2:15 TLV). What does all this mean? It means that Yeshua's death on the stake took away *HaSatan's* authority over the earth.

What happened to *HaSatan*? Yeshua said: .... "*now the prince of this world will be driven out.*" (John 12:31 TLV). Other versions say "cast out." Where did Yeshua cast *HaSatan*? He cast him into the Abyss. And that's what Revelation 20, verse 3, is about. But, it happened when Yeshua died on the stake and is not something which will happen some 1000 years in the future.

The "thousand years" is symbolic language. It refers to a period of time which could actually be "thousands of years." Reverend Ellis Skolfield points out that the word thousand is translated from the Greek *chilioi* (khil'-ee-oy), a word called an indefinite plural. It could mean one thousand, but it could also mean many thousands. This is one of the various symbolisms that make verses in Revelation difficult to understand. *Chilioi* is an indefinite plural but Dispensationalism's doctrine of the "thousand year reign of Christ" is based upon a definite plural, exactly one thousand years. Even though the translation of the plural word *chilioi* as one thousand is technically correct in its usage, if we insist on it meaning "exactly 1000 years," the sense of the passage could be lost. Used symbolically, it could be any

number or even thousands of years because it is a plural word. But, it also has a singular form, the word *chilias*, which actually does mean a single thousand.

Why didn't Yeshua say *chilias*, the singular, to *Yochanan* rather than *chilioi*, an indefinite plural? Maybe, because the understanding which He wanted us to have goes beyond understanding it as a period of exactly 1000 years. If we apply this understanding to *HaSatan's* being bound for a thousand years in Revelation 20 verse 2, the indefinite plural can mean that he was bound for more than one thousand years, even almost two thousand years and still be correct. But more specifically, this "thousand years" of Revelation chapter 20, verse 3, refers to the period of time since Yeshua died on the stake, the time when *HaSatan* was cast out, until his release from the Abyss, something more than 1,900 years later. He was released from the Abyss sometime around 1948 when Israel became a nation again. During the years that *HaSatan* was in the Abyss, he troubled Yeshua's followers through his demon network on the earth, but he has been personally directing their activities for the last 74 or so years. *2 He (Yeshua) seized the dragon—the ancient serpent, who is the devil and satan—and bound him for a thousand years. 3 He also threw him into the abyss and locked and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed. After these things, he must be released for a short while.* (Revelation 20:3-4 TLV). In ADONAI's time, seventy-four years or a hundred years is "a short while." Can you see the escalation of *HaSatan's* activities which have occurred since 1948? *HaSatan* is very actively trying to regain the kingdoms which were taken from him by Yeshua.

This message is not being given to cause fear, but to inform and to allow for correct action. We are not to have a spirit of fear or to be timid in our stance regarding Yeshua. *Sha'ul* said to Timothy: *7 For God has not given us a spirit of timidity but of power and love and self-discipline.* (2Timothy 1:7 TLV). We have that power, love and self-discipline, we must just activate it. Yeshua said: *8 "But you will receive power when the Ruach ha-Kodesh has come upon you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and through all Judah, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."* (Acts 1:8 TLV). We are His witnesses in the "the end of the earth." He has given us that power and it is available whenever we allow the *Ruach Kodesh* to work freely in our lives.

I am convinced that there will be no driverless cars or pilotless planes in our future, no secret Rapture when believers will secretly be whisked to heaven. But there is a coming time when we will rise to meet Yeshua in the air. But, it won't be a secret. Every eye will see it! After that, there is a Messianic age, a time after which Yeshua has defeated all His enemies. We who know Him will be with Him for eternity. *Yochanan* said: *1 Then the angel showed me a river of the water of life—bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 down the middle of the city's street.* (Revelation 22:1-2a TLV). This description is a snapshot of just a tiny part of what we will experience in that joyful and happy time with our Messiah. It is a coming time which is also symbolized by the harvest Festival of *Sukkot*. In this festival ADONAI depicts the joy which we will have when we have completed our work which Yeshua has given us, the harvest of souls, and we have entered into the celebration time after the harvest. Let's celebrate *Sukkot* today with joy as we look forward to the complete joy of the coming of G-d's Kingdom on earth. *Chag Sukkot Sameach!*