



Parasha Balak

July 12, 2025

Torah: Numbers 22:2-25:9

Haftarah: Micah 5:6-6:8

See message notes beitshalom.us for parasha-specific messages

Ketuvim Shlichim: John 7:1-44

Specific to today's message

Disciples of Yeshua 35

Shabbat shalom Mishpacha! In His *Torah* (Leviticus 23), ADONAI gave Israel seven festivals. Two weeks ago, we spoke about the Fall festivals *Yom Teruah* and *Yom Kippur*. There are seven *Moedim*: *Shabbat* (the Seventh Day Sabbath), *Chag HaMatzot/Pesach* (the Festival of Unleavened Bread/Passover), *Shavuot* (Festival of Weeks/Pentecost), *Yom Teruah/Rosh Hashana* (Festival of Trumpets/the Head of the Year), *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement), *Sukkot*, and *Shemini Atzeret* (Eighth Day of Assembly). While each initially had an unknown symbolic meaning, they are gradually being revealed over time. ADONAI said: 2 ...: “These are the appointed moadim of Adonai, which you are to proclaim to be holy convocations—My moadim.” (Leviticus 23:2b TLV). He said, they are *moadei ADONAI*, מוֹעֲדֵי יְהוָה, His appointed festivals, which we are to proclaim as *mikra’ei kodesh*, מִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ, His holy convocations. Contrary to what some say, they have never been “Jewish Festivals,” but always “ADONAI’s Festivals, His Convocations, His Assemblies, meetings to be held in His presence. The number seven appears repeatedly in the *Torah*, with seven festivals, seven days, and the seventh day each carrying profound symbolism connected to the number seven, a number representing completion and perfection, symbols of ADONAI’s unfolding plan for Israel and the people of the world.

While Yeshua has fulfilled the two Spring Festivals, the four Fall Festivals have not been fulfilled, and we continue to observe them, rehearsing their coming fulfillment every year. Just as we believe that Yeshua fulfilled Unleavened Bread, Passover, and Weeks, we think He will also fulfill the final four, Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Tabernacles, and Eighth Day of Celebration. Today, we are discussing *Sukkot*, the Festival of Tabernacles, the fifth of the yearly festivals, which we believe will be fulfilled sometime soon in *Acharit Hayamim*, the End of Days, the period in which we currently reside. After *Sukkot*’s physical fulfillment, the seventh festival, *Shabbat*, the first listed, will have been fulfilled as Yeshua brings eternal *shalom*, peace with G-d and man. This will occur when Yeshua ushers in *Olam Habah*, the World to Come, the time right after He defeats His enemies, and everyone who can be saved has been saved. In my opinion, the seventh festival, *Shemini Atzeret*, and its symbolism will be fulfilled last. We will conclude our message series next week with a discussion of this seventh festival.

The fulfillment of all seven festivals will mark the completion of ADONAI’s purpose for giving them. The yearly cycle of festivals is His reminder to all the members of His Commonwealth of Israel of His promises. Revelation 21:1-4 discloses His commitment to create a new physical Earth and establish His direct connection with its inhabitants. He said He would create a new heaven and a new earth, bring down the holy city, the New Jerusalem,

from heaven, and live among us, with no more mourning, crying, or pain, for death will have been defeated.

Sukkot סוכות is a festival that takes place in Israel after the fall harvest. ADONAI designed it as a thanksgiving festival to celebrate the gathering of the agricultural harvest, but also to commemorate and be a reminder of Israel's forty-year wanderings in the desert. Its official name is *Chag HaSukkot*, the Festival of Tabernacles, or Booths. You may also hear *Chag HaAsif*, the Festival of Ingathering, or sometimes just *HaChag*, the Festival, which was considered the most joyous and important festival in ancient times. Another name that describes this sentiment is *Zeman Simchatenu*, the Season of Our Joy.

ADONAI said: 34 *“Speak to Bnei-Yisrael, and say, On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the Feast of Sukkot, for seven days to Adonai. 35 On the first day there is to be a holy convocation—you are to do no laborious work. 36 For seven days you are to bring an offering by fire to Adonai.”* (Leviticus 24:34-36a TLV). The first day, the fifteenth of *Tishrei*, is a holy convocation, a *Shabbat*, one of the seven special Sabbaths of ADONAI's festivals. On the fifteenth day of the month, we assemble ourselves before ADONAI, resting from our usual labor and our jobs. Although offerings made by fire cannot be brought without the Temple, we can and should gather on this day.

ADONAI also tells us how we are to celebrate. 40 *“On the first day you are to take choice fruit of trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and rejoice before Adonai your God for seven days. 41 You are to celebrate it as a festival to Adonai for seven days in the year. It is a statute forever throughout your generations—you are to celebrate it in the seventh month. 42 You are to live in sukkot for seven days. All the native-born in Israel are to live in sukkot, 43 so that your generations may know that I had Bnei-Yisrael to dwell in sukkot when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. I am Adonai your God.”* (Leviticus 23:40-43 TLV). *Sukkot* is perhaps the most challenging festival for those in the Messianic Jewish Movement to celebrate, primarily due to the potential risk of legalism. We want to obey what ADONAI requires of us, but we don't always understand the meaning of His words. These words present a challenging question: *“On the first day you are to take choice fruit of trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and rejoice before Adonai your God for seven days.* How are we to interpret this? The words tell us that on the first day, we are to take some fruit and three kinds of branches and rejoice with them before ADONAI for seven days. However, since we don't have a clue about how to approach this, we rely on the rabbis for interpretation. They say that it is done with what they call the *arba minim*, the four species, consisting of: the *lulav*, a palm branch; the *hadassim*, myrtle branches; the *aravot*, willow branches; and the *etrog*, a citron, a type of citrus fruit. They got their understanding from the Oral Torah, a tradition later recorded as the *Mishnah*, a part of the *Talmud*, around 200 CE. *Tractate Sukkah* is their authority for all aspects of this festival. To the observant Jew, these Talmudic commands hold the same authority as the written *Torah*. But that is not our belief. For us, the only authority that commands our obedience as Messianic disciples of Yeshua is ADONAI's written *Torah*. Does this mean that we shouldn't worship with the *Lulav* and *Eetrog*? It depends on how we view what we are doing. We readily understand that we are not commanded to obey the *Talmud*. However, we can worship in this way if we understand that we are not required to do it, but rather that we get to do it. Messianic followers of Yeshua do not violate any commands by not using a *Lulav* and *Eetrog* in *Sukkot* worship, and they do not violate any commands by using them in their worship. It is something that we can do if we choose to, and it is the only logical way for us to observe. And there's something about worshipping with the *Lulav* and *Eetrog* that's unexplainable. Shaking tree branches while

holding a type of lemon doesn't make any sense in the natural world. But it can provide a spiritual blessing, even a sense of *shalom*, as a way of worshiping ADONAI.

We can also live in a *sukkah*. We receive a similar type of spiritual fulfillment when we gather in a *sukkah* for a meal, or sleep in them, as some wish to do. However, these are things that we get to do, not things that we have to do. The *Torah* is very explicit about the *sukkah*: 42 *You are to live in sukkot for seven days. All the native-born in Israel are to live in sukkot.* This is a command for Jews in Israel. Messianic Jews and Gentiles in the United States are not commanded to live in a *sukkah* for seven days. However, as an expression of our devotion to ADONAI, we can choose to do these things in a *sukkah* if we wish.

When we celebrate with the *Lulav* and the *sukkah*, it is our voluntary expression of love for ADONAI and Yeshua, our rehearsal for the coming spiritual fulfillment of the Festival of *Sukkot*. Camping out for seven days or a weekend during *Sukkot* can be fun and spiritually fulfilling, provided it is done from the heart and not driven by a legalistic mindset. The modern Messianic celebration of *Sukkot* has evolved into a joyous outdoor festival marked by symbols and a festive atmosphere. The week's focus is the *sukkah* decorated with fruits, vegetables, cornstalks, palms, willows, and other greenery, as well as fellowship. According to Jewish tradition, guests are welcomed, and hospitality is a top priority. We have enjoyed watching the Israeli film, *Ushpizin*, about a young rabbi's family's unusual *Sukkot* guests. It is a hilarious depiction of what might happen when friends not seen in years invite themselves to join the family in the *sukkah* for a week. Those in my generation would like to be able to celebrate *Sukkot* this way, but our bodies don't have the strength to construct them or the stamina to hold out for extended celebrating. But for those who can, it is a wonderful time.

There is a subtle reference to *Sukkot* in the book of John: 14 *And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us.* (John 1:14a TLV). The word "tabernacled" comes from the Greek word *skénoó* (skay-no'-o), which means to encamp, dwell, or inhabit. In the Septuagint, *skenos*, the noun form, translates the Hebrew word *Mishkan*, meaning Tabernacle, which comes from the Hebrew verb *shakan*, meaning to dwell or inhabit. Thus, at His birth, Yeshua came to tabernacle among us, with tabernacle as a possible reference to the time of year in which He was born. There is scriptural evidence that suggests that Yeshua may have been born during this festival. Three major circumstances hint at this possibility. One surrounds the birth of *Yochanan HaMatavil*, John the Immerser, and his age relative to that of his cousin Yeshua. A second is the time of the year when shepherds would be in the fields with their flocks. And the third, is the service cycle of the priests in the Temple (1 Chronicles 24:1-19), as it relates to Zechariah, John's father, a *kohen* (a member of division 8, *Aviyah*), and when he would have been serving in the Temple. These and other clues mark a trail to *Sukkot*. While we are not told the time of year that *Yosef* and *Miryam* traveled to Bethlehem, considering the other *Sukkot* imagery, it is possible that the manger described as Yeshua's cradle was located in a *sukkah*. When Jacob moved back to Canaan from Haran (Genesis 33:17), he settled in a town called *Sukkot*, and he built *sukkot*, cattle shelters. Is it possible that the building in which Yeshua was born was a *sukkah*, a cattle shelter, as indicated by the presence of a feeding trough? While we see these things in Scripture as possibilities, we must be cautious not to conclude that they are definitively true, but rather things that we can ponder. We have not been told when Yeshua was born, nor to celebrate His birth.

Yeshua observed the *Torah* in every regard, including the observance of all the festivals. In John chapter 7, He is seen attending the Festival of *Sukkot* on the seventh day of the festival, *Hoshanah Rabah*. During the festival, a water-pouring ceremony was held each morning with water from the pool of Siloam. In the Temple, it was ceremoniously poured into a basin at the base of the Altar of Burnt Offerings. The water ceremony was considered to be the most joyful of all the Temple ceremonies. The *Mishnah* states, “that he that has not seen the rejoicing at the place of water-drawing has never seen rejoicing in his life.” (*Sukkah* 5:1). This statement tells us that the joy was at the Pool of Siloam when the water was drawn, and not as much on its pouring. Because it was still dark when the water was drawn, the ceremony was accompanied by a torchlight procession, along with dancing, singing, and chanting accompanied by musical instruments. The water pouring was a symbolic act carried out in recognition of this prophecy by Isaiah: 3 *With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.* (Isaiah 12:3 TLV). The focus is on the drawing of the water, and the people of Israel recognized that their salvation was through their relationship with ADONAI and Temple worship. That was the scene on the seventh day of the festival, and a tremendous crowd was in the Temple. The *kohen* made his way up the hill into the Temple enclosure with the water, his path illuminated by hundreds of torches. He entered the Temple and approached the altar, where the water in his golden pitcher was ceremoniously poured into a basin at its base. As the water was drawn and poured, the prophecy was brought to the people’s minds: “Then you will joyfully draw water from the wells of salvation.” In the year 30 CE, Yeshua was at the festival. He called out loudly: 37, “*If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture says, ‘out of his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’*” (John 7:37b-38 TLV). Based upon Isaiah’s words, it seems more likely that Yeshua’s statement was made to the people gathered at the Pool of Siloam rather than in the Temple. He spoke to the people gathered about a coming new way of salvation, *mayim chayim*, living water, as a symbol of *yeshu’ah*, the Hebrew word for salvation, and *Ruach HaKodesh*, the Holy Spirit, which would be given after His death. Living water, that which comes from rain or a flowing source, is required to fill a *mikveh*, an immersion pool, the place of *tevillah*, immersion, an action that spiritually cleanses. *Mayim chayim* also brings to mind Yeshua as the rock in the wilderness during 40 years of wandering when the rock gushed forth water: 4 .. *and all drank the same spiritual drink—for they were drinking from a spiritual rock that followed them, and the Rock was Messiah.* (1 Corinthians 10:4 TLV). In a way, the rock represented Yeshua, while at the same time, Yeshua provided the water that flowed from the rock. It was physical water, but *Sha’ul* tells us that it was also a spiritual drink, something else that the Israelites needed.

We said that *Sukkot* is also called *Zeman Simchatenu*, the Season of Our Joy. Concerning the 40 years in the wilderness, it highlights a time of joy in entering the Land of Canaan because ADONAI divinely led the Israelites through the dangers of the wilderness into the Promised Land. Today’s festival culminates in a season of joy, following the yearly period of trial, repentance, and redemption leading up to *Yom Kippur*. The symbolism in this cycle is corporate, a picture of ADONAI’s covenant people, who have reached the point of rejoicing that everyone’s sins are forgiven, and we are now living in ADONAI’s presence. As followers of Yeshua, we experience this joy every day, but it is also good to collectively acknowledge the coming spiritual deliverance for our Jewish brothers and sisters.

The prophetic fulfillment of *Sukkot* has different facets. It is a harvest festival that celebrates the gathering of the year’s final harvest, marking the climax of the annual cycle of festivals. It is also connected to Israel’s time in the wilderness, a period when they lived in

temporary dwellings as they moved from place to place, secure in ADONAI's embrace, as He provided them with protection, food, and water. Just as ADONAI began the journey with Israel in the wilderness, leading them from slavery to nationhood through the years, His physical provision and protection also foreshadowed His spiritual goals for the people that He chose to be priests to the nations. The fulfillment of *Sukkot* appears to be a harvest, a harvest of men's and women's souls, the Gentiles of the world, but also the souls of the very priests themselves. Just as Yeshua tabernacled among us in a temporary human form on the earth, so are we in a temporary dwelling, a tabernacle—the *sukkah* that is our body. This temporary dwelling is a place for our souls and spirits, a temple in which the Holy Spirit can dwell. *19 Or don't you know that your body is a temple of the Ruach ha-Kodesh who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you were bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body.* (I Corinthians 6:19-20 TLV). But in the future, we will leave these earthly *sukkot* for more glorious ones as we join Messiah Yeshua and His heavenly army in the clouds. *53 For this corruptible must put on incorruptibility, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 But when this corruptible will have put on incorruptibility and this mortal will have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."* (1 Corinthians 15:53-54 TLV).

Moed, a Hebrew term meaning "festival" or "feast," comes from a root that signifies a circle, and reflects the repeating nature of the annual festivals, providing a complete picture of what ADONAI is doing in our lives. At *Pesach*, Passover, Messiah Yeshua became our sacrificial lamb. At *Bikkurim*, Firstfruits, he rose and became the Firstfruits from the dead. At *Shavuot*, He gave us His *Ruach HaKodesh* and wrote His *Torah* on our hearts (Jeremiah 31:32). During *Rosh Hashanah*, He called us to repentance, and at *Yom Kippur* He forgave us. At *Sukkot*, we reach the goal for which we have been striving, a time when we will joyfully live in the presence of our Messiah and King, Yeshua, along with all the other human fruit of His harvest. We complete this sacred cycle of festivals every year, pictures of our future, as we eagerly await the coming day when we will celebrate *Sukkot* in Jerusalem with Messiah Yeshua.

On *Hoshana Rabbah*, the sixth day of the festival, Yeshua told us He would give us living water. *Hoshana Rabah* means "the great *hoshana*," a contraction of *hoshia na*, meaning "save us now," words shouted by the crowds as Yeshua entered Jerusalem for the last week of His earthly life. (Matthew 21:9, Mark 11:9-10, and John 12:13). It was no accident that it was on *Hoshana rabah*, the day called the "Great Salvation," when Yeshua stood up and said, "I will give you living water." We also find *hoshia na* in the *Hallel* (Psalms 113-118), the traditional Scriptures in the Psalms that Jews have prayed on *Sukkot* for centuries: *25 Hoshia-na! Please, Adonai, save now! We beseech You, Adonai, prosper us!* (Psalm 118:25 TLV). This plea was called out to Yeshua as he entered Jerusalem before his last Passover. The people waved palm branches and called out "*Hoshai na!*", a symbolic act taken from the Festival of *Sukkot*, because they desperately wanted Him to deliver them from the Romans. We look forward to that future, *Hoshana Rabbah*, the "Great Day" of the Festival of *Sukkot*, when we will have been delivered and will all wave palm branches before our Messiah and King.

Sukkot exemplifies the celebration to come in the *Olam Habah*, the World to Come, when King Yeshua has defeated His enemies and is firmly ruling from His capital, Jerusalem. Revelation describes what happens on this day: *9 After these things I looked, and behold, a vast multitude that no one could count—from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues—was standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white*

robes, with palm branches in their hands 10 and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” (Revelation 7:9-10 TLV). On that day, the whole world is at peace. The celebration continues forever—an eternity filled with joy and peace that can only come from a loving G-d who created this world and through His Son Yeshua, has taken it from the sin of the beginning to final victory. Shabbat shalom!