

# Appointed Times

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## Chapter 12 Succot

Without a doubt, the most joyous Appointed Time within the yearly cycle is Succot (סוכות). It is even referred to as "the season of our joy." Sometimes referred to as The Feast of Tabernacles, this is the last of the 3 Pilgrimage Feasts, which began with Unleavened Bread. Interestingly, there was no commandment to rejoice during Unleavened Bread, and the second Pilgrimage Feast, Shabuot, contains only one commandment to rejoice. The Feast of Succot is the crescendo of the Feasts, when the people are specifically and repeatedly commanded to rejoice.

<sup>13</sup> *Celebrate the Feast of Succot for seven days after you have gathered in the produce of your threshing floor and of your winepress: <sup>14</sup> And thou shall rejoice in your Feast, you and your son, and your daughter, and your manservant, and your maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within your gates.*" Debarim 16:13-14. Also in Vayiqra 23:40 we read "you shall rejoice before YHWH your Elohim for seven days."

The Hebrew word for "rejoice" is "simchat" (שמחה). It derives from "samach" which means: "brighten, joy, glee, cheer, gladness." So it is interesting how the joy was to increase throughout the harvest season until it culminated at Succot. Succot was always to occur at "the end of days" - the end of the harvest season around the tequfah. (Shemot 23:16; 34:22).

The grain had previously been cut, gathered, winnowed, threshed and the bikkurim presented at Shabuot. Now the fruits had been harvested, and those bikkurim would be brought before YHWH. There was new wine, and that was especially helpful relative to the command to rejoice. It was time to go to the House of YHWH and celebrate.

Here is the command setting the specific time for Succot. <sup>34</sup> *Speak unto the children of Yisrael, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Succot for seven days unto YHWH. <sup>35</sup> On the first day shall be a set apart gathering: you shall do no servile work therein.*" Vayiqra 23:34-35.

This was like a homecoming event, and it was unique in that it is named after a place. Two times in the Scriptures a geographical location is mentioned bearing the name Succot. It is first mentioned after Yaakob, renamed "am Yisrael," was leaving his servitude with Laban and returning to the Promised Land. The second mention occurs immediately after the Children of Yisrael were departing their captivity in Egypt on their way to the Promised Land.

In each case, there was an important event that occurred before Yisrael arrived at a location bearing the name Succot. In the case of Yaacob, he was on his way back to the Promised Land after having essentially become a tribe. He wrestled with a "man" and was renamed "am Yisrael." He crossed through the waters into the Land. He divided his tribe into

two tribes, and then reunited them before journeying to Succot, where he built a house (בֵּית). The Covenant Land is all about the House, and this is an important theme of Succot. (Beresheet 33). This entire event was prophetic, and it is noteworthy that his youngest son Benjamin was not present, because he was not yet born.

There is another mention of a place called Succot. It is not the same place, but once again it involved "am Yisrael." After the Passover in Egypt, the Children of Yisrael, along with a mixed multitude, left victoriously on their journey out of Egypt. They left Ramses on Day 15 of Month 1 according to Bemidbar 33:3, and arrived at Succot on the day when the Resheet would later be offered, on Day 16 of Month 1. (Shemot 12:37, Bemidbar 33:5).

During this return to the Promised Land, "am Yisrael" was expanded beyond the physical descendants of Yaacob. Once again, this was prophetic that the nations would be gathered and "grafted in" to Yisrael at Succot. What makes this event so profound is that it essentially links the Feast of Succot with Unleavened Bread in time and space - the two Feasts that begin on Day 15 and end on Day 21.

So there is a common theme of going to the Promised Land. There is a place, as well as a time, associated with Succot and it is all a part of the Covenant process between YHWH and His people - am Yisrael. Essentially, this Feast is typified by its very name. A succah, the singular for succot, is a tent or temporary dwelling place - sometimes referred to as a tabernacle. It is something that the Covenant people construct and reside in each year to commemorate living with YHWH. Our succah is a temporary house as we look forward to dwelling in the permanent House of YHWH that He builds.

There are other significant events and traditions linked with this Feast. For instance, it would appear that Noah's ark came to rest during Succot. <sup>13</sup> *The water receded steadily from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the water had gone down, <sup>4</sup> and on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat.* Beresheet 8:2-4.

Here is another interesting example of significant events falling at opposite ends of the calendar. Noah's ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat on Day 17 of Month 7, exactly 17 days into the Civil Year. And as we shall soon see, a very significant event occurred in the life of the Messiah on Day 17 of Month 1, exactly 17 days into the Spiritual Year.

Joshua (Yahushua) led the Covenant people, Yisrael, across the Jordan on Day 10 of Month 1. This hearkened back to when Yisrael crossed through the Red Sea 40 years earlier. Both of these events were corporate mikvah's, or washings, of Yisrael that were to cleanse Yisrael before they entered the Promised Land. This is why Peter instructed people to repent and be immersed. In other words, get cleaned up if you want to follow the Covenant path and receive the Covenant Promises. (Acts 2:38).

We need to follow the same path that YHWH led Yisrael, like a Shepherd. As a result, the day that Yisrael crossed over the Jordan on Day 10 of Month 1 has great prophetic significance for Yisrael. It was the day that Nadab and Abihu died, and also the day the lamb for the Passover was chosen.

There is another interesting tradition in Judaism that is carried out at Succot. In the synagogue, they circle the Bema once each day during the first six days of Succot. Then on the seventh day of Succot, on Day 21 of Month 7, they circle the Bema seven times shouting "save now" and "send salvation now," following the pattern of Jericho.<sup>147</sup> The Battle of Jericho is filled with symbolism, as it was Yisrael's first victory upon entering the Promised Land where the battle was entirely fought by YHWH.<sup>148</sup> This event is apparently prophetic of a future deliverance that YHWH will perform for the Covenant people of Yisrael.

Now looking back in the text, we read the first direct mention of Succot was the commandment regarding the Feast of Ingathering at Sinai, prior to the golden calf event. <sup>16</sup> *Celebrate the Feast of Harvest with the firstfruits of the crops you sow in your field. Celebrate the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in your crops from the field.* <sup>17</sup> *three times a year all the men are to appear before the Sovereign YHWH.*" Shemot 23:16-17.

After the calf event, there is a very detailed discussion of the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Firstborn followed by a description of the two remaining Pilgrimage Feasts. *"And you shall observe the Feast of weeks, of the bikkuri of wheat harvest, and the Feast of ingathering at the year's tequfot."* Shemot 34:22.

There is a much more detailed description of this time found in Vayiqra. <sup>33</sup> *And YHWH spoke unto Mosheh, saying,* <sup>34</sup> *Speak unto the children of Yisrael, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Succot for seven days unto YHWH.* <sup>35</sup> *On the first day shall be a set apart rehearsal: you shall do no servile work therein.* <sup>36</sup> *Seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire unto YHWH: on the eighth day shall be a set apart rehearsal unto you; and you shall offer an offering made by fire unto YHWH: it is a atzeret; and you shall do no servile work therein.* <sup>37</sup> *These are the Appointed Times of YHWH, which you shall proclaim to be set apart rehearsals, to offer an offering made by fire unto YHWH, a burnt offering, and a grain offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, every thing upon His day:* <sup>38</sup> *Beside the Sabbaths of YHWH, and beside your gifts, and beside all your vows, and beside all your freewill offerings, which you give unto YHWH.* <sup>39</sup> *Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the Land, you shall keep a "Feast unto YHWH" (hagag ta-hag-YHWH) seven days: on the first day shall be a Sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a Sabbath.* <sup>40</sup> *And you shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before YHWH your Elohim seven days.* <sup>41</sup> *And you shall keep it a "Feast unto YHWH" (hagtem wta hag YHWH) seven days in the year. It shall be a statute throughout the ages (olam) in your generations: you shall celebrate (tahagu) it in the seventh month.* <sup>42</sup> *You shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Yisraelites born shall dwell in booths:* <sup>43</sup> *That your generations may know that I made the children of Yisrael to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am YHWH your Elohim."* Vayiqra 23:33-43.

So we see that Sukkot is a hag (הג), which is a Feast. It lasts for seven days, the first of which is a rest day. Take special note of the "also" in verse 39, as well as the text that follows. The previous verses had essentially described Succot along with the other Appointed Times, and then seemed to conclude with the phrase "these are the Appointed Times of YHWH." The description appeared to be concluded, but then the text went on to describe Succot again.

This is not a mistake or mere redundancy. The second enhanced description is meant to reveal something special about this time. For one thing, we are not simply instructed to "keep" or "celebrate" this Feast as some translations provide. Instead, the command is to "hagag the hag." The word hagag (הגג) is clearly related to the word hag (הג), which is commonly translated as "feast." The word hagag (הגג) means: "to move in a circle, to march in a sacred procession." This reminds us specifically of the event at Jericho. The word hagag (הגג) also means: "to reel to and fro, to dance, to be giddy." This tends to amplify the notion of rejoicing during this time, and the emphasis can be seen from another mystery hidden within the text.

Of particular note is the existence of the Aleph Taw (תא) essentially connecting this Feast with YHWH. In the very text we can see the Messiah acting as a conduit, or a bridge, between the Covenant people and YHWH. This is particularly significant since this is the Feast which commemorates dwelling with YHWH, and it is here in the second mention, that

we are provided with a list of building supplies. The repeated use of the word hagag emphasizes the cyclical nature of this Time as it relates to the Covenant. Year after year, as we rehearse this special time, the Covenant people are being swept in and prepared to dwell with YHWH.

There is another description of Succot in Debarim. <sup>13</sup> *You shall observe the Feast of Succot seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine:* <sup>14</sup> *And thou shalt rejoice in thy Feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates.* <sup>15</sup> *Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn Feast unto YHWH your Elohim in the place which YHWH shall choose: because YHWH your Elohim shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice.* <sup>16</sup> *Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before YHWH your Elohim in the place which He shall choose; in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and in the Feast of Weeks, and in the Feast of Succot: and they shall not appear before YHWH empty:* <sup>17</sup> *Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of YHWH your Elohim which He hath given thee." Debarim 16:13-17*

Notice again the emphasis on rejoicing, and it is not limited to just native Yisraelites. Everyone dwelling in the Land, "within thy gates" is invited to this Feast. This is a demonstration of how YHWH desires to fellowship with His Creation, and it includes all of mankind, not just Yisrael. This is made abundantly clear by the sacrifices that are prescribed during the Feast. This is, without a doubt, the most elaborate listing of sacrifices for all of the Appointed Times. Take special note of the number of each animal being presented.

<sup>12</sup> *And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month you shall have a set apart rehearsal; you shall do no servile work, and you shall keep a Feast unto YHWH seven days:* <sup>13</sup> *And you shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto YHWH; thirteen young bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year; they shall be without blemish:* <sup>14</sup> *And their grain offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals unto every bullock of the thirteen bullocks, two tenth deals to each ram of the two rams,* <sup>15</sup> *And a several tenth deal to each lamb of the fourteen lambs:* <sup>16</sup> *And one kid of the goats for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his grain offering, and his drink offering.* <sup>17</sup> *And on the second day you shall offer twelve young bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without spot:* <sup>18</sup> *And their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner:* <sup>19</sup> *And one kid of the goats for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and the grain offering thereof, and their drink offerings.* <sup>20</sup> *And on the third day eleven bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish;* <sup>21</sup> *And their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner:* <sup>22</sup> *And one goat for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and his grain offering, and his drink offering.* <sup>23</sup> *And on the fourth day ten bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish:* <sup>24</sup> *Their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner:* <sup>25</sup> *And one kid of the goats for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his grain offering, and his drink offering.* <sup>26</sup> *And on the fifth day nine bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without spot:* <sup>27</sup> *And their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner:* <sup>28</sup> *And one goat for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and his grain offering, and his drink offering.* <sup>29</sup> *And on the sixth day eight bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first*

year without blemish: <sup>30</sup> And their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner: <sup>31</sup> And one goat for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his grain offering, and his drink offering. <sup>32</sup> And on the seventh day seven bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish: <sup>33</sup> And their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner: <sup>34</sup> And one goat for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his grain offering, and his drink offering." Bemidbar 29:12-40.

We already saw that this was a Feast for everyone, and the detail should make everyone take note. What is particularly interesting is the bulls. There are 70 bulls offered over the seven days of Succot, but only the bulls sacrificed on the first two days were specified by YHWH to be "young bulls." On day 1 and 2 there are 13 and 12 "young bulls" offered respectively. The Hebrew words translated as "young bulls" is *beni-baqar* (בני-בקר).

These two words literally mean "my son" (*beni*) "breaks forth" (*baqar*). How profound that during the first two days there is an offering of "sons" and the numbers 12 and 13 are closely linked with the Children of Yisrael and their entry into Egypt. Yaakob became the father of 11 sons in Padan while he worked for his father-in-law Laban. He had a 12<sup>th</sup> son in Bethlehem, after his name had been changed to Yisrael.

So there were 12 sons of Yisrael. Later, while in Egypt, he adopted the two sons of Joseph - Ephraim and Manasseh to be first in the birth order over Reuben and Simeon. Therefore, the original twelve sons, followed by the elevation of Joseph's two sons in the stead of Joseph, essentially resulted in 13 tribes. Interestingly, the Scriptures never place more than 12 tribes in one group.<sup>149</sup>

There is a mystery revealed, and a powerful message to be discerned, when we examine the Hebrew words with the numerical value of 13. Here are some of the words that we see in the Scriptures that have the Gematria value 13: "echad" (unified, one), *abi* (my father), *ahaba* (love), *habow* (come), *b'hag* (feast), *yahab* (give), *zedeb* (dowry). Obviously, something very special occurred when Yisrael adopted and elevated Joseph's 2 sons, and it involves the Appointed Times.

Indeed, read the prophecy over the Tribe of Joseph given by Mosheh. "His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of *ra'am* (ראם): with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh." Debarim 33:17. There is dispute over the interpretation of the word *mar* which some interpret as "wild ox" while others interpret it as "unicorn."

The message should be loud and clear - Ephraim and Manasseh, who were elevated to Joseph's status of the first born, are likened to the firstlings of the bullocks. The text refers to "My son-breaks forth." This is prophetic of something that is getting ready to occur on the first two days of Succot in Jubilee Year 120.

For those unfamiliar with the history of Yisrael, it may be helpful to provide a brief summary. After the death of King Solomon (Shlomo), Joseph seceded from the Southern Kingdom of Yahudah, and brought along the majority of the Tribes of Yisrael. The Tribe of Joseph ruled over the Northern Kingdom, known as the House of Yisrael, which was later exiled and taken captive by the Assyrians from the north. Their primary sin was the setting up of two altars to, none other than, a golden calf.<sup>150</sup>

Both Kingdoms were exiled. The Kingdom of Yahudah was exiled by the Babylonians, but some of them returned after their 70 year exile. The Northern Kingdom, represented by

Joseph, has never returned from the punishment of exile, and the long-awaited return is imminent.<sup>151</sup> Essentially, Joseph has been scattered throughout the world and mixed with the nations. For Mosheh truly prophesied of Joseph: "he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth." Debarim 33:17.

While the Kingdom of Yahudah never lost their identity during their exile, the House of Yisrael (Joseph) has been completely cut off from YHWH, exactly as prophesied by Hoshea. (see Hoshea 1:9). The House of Yisrael (Joseph) is currently blended in with the nations, essentially hidden from view - unrecognizable. This is a prophetic amplification of what happened to the man Joseph when he was forced into Egypt.

Joseph was originally removed from the Land as a slave, and ultimately elevated to power. He ended up blending in with Egypt. He married an Egyptian woman and essentially looked just like an Egyptian - unrecognizable to his brothers. The same holds true for Joseph - the House of Yisrael. Originally taken from the Land as slaves, the House of Yisrael has blended into the Nations. The House of Yisrael, like Joseph, is virtually unrecognizable to his brothers - Yahudah. Someday soon, YHWH will cast His net and draw back His people from the nations. (Hoshea 1:10-11).

Remember that the Nations are often symbolized by the number 70. As has already been mentioned, there are 70 bullocks slaughtered during this Feast. The first two days they are called "young bulls" (beni-baqar) while the remaining days they are "bullocks" (parim). The slaughtering of the bullocks during this "homecoming Feast" of the seventh month culminates with seven bullocks being slaughtered on the seventh day. The prophetic implications are profound.

Interestingly this is the one Feast that the entire planet will be required to observe during the millennial reign.

*<sup>1</sup> Behold, the Day of YHWH cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.*

*<sup>2</sup> For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. <sup>3</sup> Then shall YHWH go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle.*

*<sup>4</sup> And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. <sup>5</sup> And you shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, you shall flee, like as you fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Yahudah: and YHWH Elohi shall come, and all the set apart ones with thee. <sup>6</sup> And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: <sup>7</sup> But it shall be one day which shall be known to YHWH, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. <sup>8</sup> And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. <sup>9</sup> And YHWH shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one (echad) YHWH, and His Name one (echad). <sup>10</sup> All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses.*

<sup>11</sup> And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited. <sup>12</sup> And this shall be the plague wherewith YHWH will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. <sup>13</sup> And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from YHWH shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour. <sup>14</sup> And Yahudah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. <sup>15</sup> And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague. <sup>16</sup> And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, YHWH of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Succot. <sup>17</sup> And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, YHWH of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. <sup>18</sup> And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith YHWH will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the Feast of Succot. <sup>19</sup> This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the Feast of Succot." Zechariah 14:1-19.

Notice that this Feast is directly associated with the Day of YHWH. The Day of YHWH is a period of time equal to one "shanah" or one Hebrew Year according to Yeshayahu 34:8, 61:2, 63:4. It is a time when, amongst other judgments being rendered upon the nations all nations will be gathered against Yisrael. Then YHWH will fight against those Nations "as when He fought in the day of battle." We know that YHWH specifically fought for Yisrael when they left Egypt (Shemot 15:1-10) and when they entered into the Land. (Joshua 10:42), among other times.

Remember at Jericho, when the Yisraelites surrounded the city and marched in a circle in a sacred ceremony - hagag (הגג). Joshua (Yahushua) had met beforehand with the Prince of the Host of YHWH. The presence of YHWH was there as Joshua (Yahushua) was instructed to take off his sandals, because he was on "holy ground." This was the same instruction given to Mosheh when he stood before the burning bush. We cannot ignore the fact that this "Prince" was YHWH Himself.

Joshua (Yahushua) was given detailed instructions for taking Jericho. Specifically, seven Priests with seven shofars were to go before the Ark as all the men of battle marched around the city over the course of seven days. The first six days they were to walk around the city once. On the seventh day, they were to walk around the city seven times, followed by the blasting of the shofars and a mighty shout. After that, the walls of Jericho came down.

Jericho was not some random city selected for destruction. There was a reason why it was taken first. Jericho was named after Yerach, the Canaanite moon god. Indeed, the Hebrew word for moon was "yerach" (ירח). In the future, the Nations will surround Jerusalem, including one group of nations who strongly identify with the crescent moon.

The Fifth Pillar of Islam requires every able-bodied adherent to Islam to make The Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca. While at Mecca, the pilgrims participate in the "Tawaf" where they march around the Kaaba seven times. The parallels between what Joshua (Yahushua) did at Jericho, and what Muslims do at Mecca are extraordinary. This is particularly poignant

since their god "Allah" is a moon deity, and the basis for the crescent moon as the symbol of Islam. This is why Muslims follow a strictly lunar calendar, with no intercalation, as opposed to the luni-solar calendar prescribed in the Scriptures, which requires intercalation.

When Yisrael, lead by Joshua (Yahushua), conquered Jericho at Succot, it was YHWH Himself Who destroyed the cult center for moon worshippers in the Promised Land. This has prophetic implications for all who worship the moon deity at Succot in the future.

The tensions between Islam and the Judeo-Christian religions seem to escalate daily, and it is interesting how Jerusalem and the Promised Land remain at the heart of this conflict. So we can certainly see the Feast of Succot as a rehearsal for a very important future event. In fact, many believe that we are soon approaching the Day of YHWH.

We are surely living in interesting times, and the Feast of Succot has particular significance as we approach the end of the age. Paul of Tarsus said that the things that happened to Yisrael during the first exodus under Mosheh, were to provide instruction to those of us living at the end of the ages. "*Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.*" 1 Corinthians 10:1-11.

The account of Yisrael coming into Covenant with YHWH is filled with prophetic clues about exactly how the Covenant journey is going to end. As a result, it is paramount that we understand the Feast of Succot. Indeed, the Feast of Succot was important when the House of Yahudah returned from their Babylonian exile, so we can imagine that it will also be significant when the House of Yisrael - Joseph returns from the long exile that began in 722 BCE.<sup>152</sup>

The Kingdom of Yahudah had witnessed the exile of their Northern brethren to the Assyrians, but did not learn from their mistakes. Yahudah continued in their sins, and was also exiled. The prophet Jeremiah (Yirmeyahu) told them that they would be conquered by the Babylonians and exiled 70 years. The Southern Kingdom of Yahudah was indeed taken captive by the Babylonians who were themselves later conquered by the Medo-Persians. This is the setting in which we find Daniel praying regarding those 70 years, and he receives a message concerning 70 weeks. (Daniel 9).

Exactly 70 years after the last captives were taken from Yahudah, Cyrus decreed they could return to fulfill the prophecy of Yirmeyahu 29:10-14. After the Decree of Cyrus (Ezra 1:1-4), the royal prince Zerubbabel and many others from the House of Yahudah returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple on the 1<sup>st</sup> of Cyrus. Construction began in the 2<sup>nd</sup> of Cyrus (Ezra 3:8-13), but the people of Yahudah were frustrated in their purposes by their adversaries who were living in the Land and wanted to help them. This was something that the people of Yahudah and Benjamin could not allow (Ezra 4:1-5).

Finally, after much struggle, a second decree was issued in the 2<sup>nd</sup> of Darius (Haggai 1:1-15, Ezra 6:1-12), and construction of the Second Temple went ahead without delay by royal decree. The Second Temple was completed in the 6<sup>th</sup> of Darius (Ezra 6:15), which was 70 years after Zerubbabel first returned under the Decree of Cyrus (Ezra 1:1-4). It was at this time that Ezra came from Babylon to Jerusalem with a second wave of immigrants (Ezra 7:1-8:32).

Within a year of his return, Ezra persuaded the House of Yahudah to put away all the foreign wives they had married (Ezra 10:1-44). It was five years after he returned that Ezra, at the conclusion of Sabbath Year 495, read from the Torah on Yom Teruah (Nehemiah 8:1-2).

On the first day of the seventh month, the Day of Blasting, the people heard the Torah. It was translated for them and they wept. They wept for many reasons. One particular reason was because they were hearing about the Appointed Times that they had forgotten while in

exile. The people were told not to weep because it was a set apart day of YHWH, an Appointed Time. Instead, the people were told to go eat "the fat" and drink "the sweet," and send portions to those who did not have anything prepared. The congregation was told not to be sorrowful because the joy of YHWH is their strength.<sup>153</sup>

After celebrating the Day of Blasting, the people returned to hear more Scripture reading. Once again the chief fathers of all the people, the Priests, and the Levites returned and taught more from the Torah. They realized that they should keep the Feast of Succot, so they built succas. They made their succas out of olive branches, pine branches, myrtle branches, palm branches, and branches of thick trees as it is written in the Torah (Vayiqra 23:40).

This was truly a time of rejoicing. Again, this was a homecoming. A return to the Mountain of the House of YHWH after all the years that it took to return and rebuild. Nehemiah wrote that the Feast had not been kept this way since the time of Joshua (Yahushua) the son of Nun.

What we see here is an incredible awakening, but also it reveals their hearts to obey. They diligently kept the commandments, including a very important one that occurs during Succot - the reading of the Torah. <sup>110</sup> *And Mosheh commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the Feast of Succot, <sup>11</sup> When all Yisrael is come to appear before YHWH your Elohim in the place which He shall choose, you shall read this Torah before all Yisrael in their hearing. <sup>12</sup> Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear YHWH your Elohim, and observe to do all the words of this Torah: <sup>13</sup> And that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear YHWH your Elohim, as long as you live in the Land whither you go over Jordan to possess it."* Debarim 31:10-13.

It is interesting to note that immediately after giving this command, Mosheh was told that it was time for him to die at the age of 120 years. Mosheh would stop short of the Promised Land because of his sin. Yahushua (Joshua) would thereafter lead the Children of Yisrael into the Land. How interesting that 120 Jubilee years leads to the end of the age, the time when Messiah will return to lead the Covenant People Yisrael into their inheritance.

As Mosheh commanded before his death, Ezra read from Debarim for the seven days of Succot at the conclusion of Sabbath Year 495 in Month 7 of 451 BCE. (Nehemiah 8:18). Notice in the command given by Mosheh that even the stranger (ha ger) was to hear the Torah. This reveals that the Torah was for all of Creation, as was the Feast. All of Creation was called to join with YHWH in Covenant and Feast at His table, in His House. As a result, the Feast was a time when all were called to rejoice, and every seven years all would hear the Torah. That would be the year of release. It was a seven year cycle known as the Shemitah cycle that was at the heart of the Jubilee cycle. The Shemitah year was the Sabbath year when even the Land would rest. Just like the count up to Shabuot counted weeks of days, the Shemitah involved weeks of years.

The House of Yahudah continued to endure many struggles and conflicts from the inhabitants of the Land. This was a great source of distress to Nehemiah. In the 20<sup>th</sup> of Artaxerxes in 443 BCE, Artaxerxes made a decree that Nehemiah could return to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls and the city of Jerusalem. Rebuilding Jerusalem was quite an ordeal. They had to fend off raiding parties as they worked around the city. In fact, the men who worked on the wall had to carry shofars, so they could sound the alarm if they came under attack. It was this Decree of Artaxerxes that initiated the count for the 7 sevens and 62 sevens of Daniel 9:25.

The walls were completed in 52 days on Day 25 of Month 6 in 443 BCE. Not long after this, every man returned to his inheritance in Jubilee Year 71 in 437 BCE. (see Nehemiah 11:20). It was at this time that Nehemiah also fulfilled the commandment to read Debarim during the seven days of Succot at the conclusion of Sabbath Year 497. *"Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the Scroll of the Torah of Elohim. And they kept the Feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a atzeret, according unto the manner."* Nehemiah 8:18.

Notice that they kept the Feast for seven days and on the eighth day was an "atzeret." Succot is a seven day feast followed by an eighth day, a separate day. The discerning individual would see the striking similarity with Passover and Unleavened Bread, only this time somewhat in reverse.

The last day of Succot is the seventh day, Day 21 of Month 7, often called Hoshana Rabbah. Unlike the last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the last day of the Feast of Succot is not a Shabbat. It is also the final day of harvest or ingathering. Tradition links this day with the last of the days of judgment, or the final judgment.

So the seven day Feast of Succot begins with a Shabbaton, but does not end with a Shabbaton. This reveals that there is work to be done on this day, and the future implication of that fact is quite telling. This final day of harvest leads to another Appointed Time known as the Eighth Day.