

FAQ

FROM THE MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS ARCHIVES (2000-2018)

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MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS
messianicapologetics.net

Frequently Asked Questions

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Cover Image: nullplus via Istockphoto

ISBN 979-8317009786 (paperback)

ASIN B09F1MWGB7 (eBook)

Published by Messianic Apologetics, a division of Outreach Israel Ministries

P.O. Box 516

McKinney, Texas 75070

(407) 933-2002

outreachisrael.net / outreachisrael.blog

messianicapologetics.net / messianicapologetics.blog

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Abbreviations and Special Terms

The following is a list of abbreviations for reference works and special terms which are used in publications by Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics. Please familiarize yourself with them as the text may reference a Bible version, i.e., RSV for the Revised Standard Version, or a source such as TWOT for the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, solely by its abbreviation. Detailed listings of these sources are provided in the Bibliography.

- ABD: *Anchor Bible Dictionary*
AMG: *Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament*
ANE: Ancient Near East(ern)
Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament
Ara: Aramaic
ASV: American Standard Version (1901)
ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)
b. Babylonian Talmud (*Talmud Bavli*)
B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.
BDAG: *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)
BDB: *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*
C.E.: Common Era or A.D.
CGEDNT: *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Barclay M. Newman)
CGL: *Cambridge Greek Lexicon* (2021)
CHALOT: *Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Holladay)
CJB: *Complete Jewish Bible* (1998)
CJSB: *Complete Jewish Study Bible* (2016)
DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition
DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls
EDB: *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*
EJ: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*
ESV: *English Standard Version* (2001)
Ger: German
GNT: *Greek New Testament*
Grk: Greek
HALOT: *Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Koehler and Baumgartner)
HCSB: *Holman Christian Standard Bible* (2004)
Heb: Hebrew
HNV: Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible
IDB: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*
IDBSup: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement*
ISBE: *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*
IVPBBC: *IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old & New Testament)*
Jastrow: *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature* (Marcus Jastrow)
JBK: *New Jerusalem Bible-Koren* (2000)
JETS: *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
KJV: *King James Version*
Lattimore: *The New Testament by Richmond Lattimore* (1996)
LITV: *Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* by Jay P. Green (1986)
LES: *Lexham English Septuagint* (2019)
LS: *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott)
LSJM: *Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott-Jones-McKenzie)
LXE: *Septuagint with Apocrypha* by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)
LXX: *Septuagint*
m. Mishnah
MT: *Masoretic Text*
NASB: *New American Standard Bible* (1977)
NASU: *New American Standard Update* (1995)
NBCR: *New Bible Commentary: Revised*
NEB: *New English Bible* (1970)
Nelson: *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words*
NETS: *New English Translation of the Septuagint* (2007)
NIB: *New Interpreter's Bible*
NIDB: *New International Dictionary of the Bible*
NIV: *New International Version* (1984)
NJB: *New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic* (1985)
NJSB: *Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures* (1999)
NKJV: *New King James Version* (1982)
NRSV: *New Revised Standard Version* (1989)
NLT: *New Living Translation* (1996)
NT: *New Testament*
OT: *Old Testament*
REB: *Revised English Bible* (1989)
RSV: *Revised Standard Version* (1952)
t. Tosefta
Tanach (Tanakh): the Old Testament
Thayer: *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*
TDNT: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
TLV: *Messianic Jewish Family Bible—Tree of Life Version* (2014)
TNIV: *Today's New International Version* (2005)
TWOT: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*
UBSHNT: *United Bible Societies' 1991 Hebrew New Testament revised edition*
v(s). *verse(s)*
Vine: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*
Vul: *Latin Vulgate*
YLT: *Young's Literal Translation* (1862/1898)
WMB: *World Messianic Bible* (2020)

Sukkot

Must I go to a campground to spend the Feast of Tabernacles with thousands of people for an entire week?

One of the instructions regarding *Sukkot* or the Feast of Tabernacles is, “Seven days you shall celebrate a feast to the LORD your God in the place which the LORD chooses” (Deuteronomy 16:15a, NASU). Few would disagree that this place or *maqom* is Jerusalem. (It is not some rural campground in North America or elsewhere.) The Feast of Tabernacles is a holiday where it was originally commanded, “Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses” (Deuteronomy 16:16a, NASU), as *Sukkot* was originally one of the three pilgrimage festivals along with Passover and *Shavuot*.

The purpose of commemorating the Feast of Tabernacles was so that the Ancient Israelites could remember the journeys of their ancestors in the wilderness—delivered by God from Egypt. Leviticus 23:43 specifies that it was codified, “so that your generations may know that I had the sons of Israel live in booths when I brought them out from the land of Egypt” (NASU). But far be it from the Feast of Tabernacles being some kind of rural festival; being brought to Jerusalem to celebrate *Sukkot* makes it a very cosmopolitan festival. *Sukkot* is a picture of the ultimate tabernacling or dwelling in eternity between God and the redeemed, specified in Revelation 21:3: “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them” (NASU). This will occur in the city of New Jerusalem. The cosmopolitan aspect of *Sukkot* is emphasized in the mainline Jewish observance and traditions of the festival.

While many observant Jews, and even a few Messianic people, make the effort to go to Jerusalem during the Festival of *Sukkot*, most are not able to do so because of economic constraints. Instead, the local synagogue and one’s home become the focal points of one’s remembrance. Jewish synagogues often erect some kind of *sukkah* on the congregation’s property, often with an event or series of events throughout the week, where the synagogue members can fellowship and commemorate. Congregational members will likewise be encouraged to erect a three-sided *sukkah* in their backyards, or if they have an apartment, on their outer patio or terrace. The *sukkah* will be a place where many people eat their meals, and even where a few people will sleep. For the most part, Messianic Jewish observance of *Sukkot* is not that unlike the Synagogue, with the congregation and one’s home being the main places of remembrance.

Since the mid-to-late 1990s, though, it has become quite commonplace throughout the independent Hebrew/Hebraic Roots movement for people to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles at a rural campground, often with hundreds, or even thousands, of other people. Families will often put aside money and actually spend the week of *Sukkot* as their yearly vacation. At these various *Sukkot* functions, there will often be a variety of teachings and workshops on Torah observance, lifestyle issues, a marketplace for sales, etc. People with minutely small congregations and fellowships find these functions as the only time that they can really interact with those of like mind on any kind of large scale. Being present in the company of hundreds of others for a week of *Sukkot* commemoration and teaching, is perceived to be the yearly highlight of their faith experience.

This latter style of observing the Feast of Tabernacles, while perhaps fulfilling a need for some people, has actually developed a few issues which congregational leaders and teachers need to be aware of for their local ministry. Many congregational leaders who have larger fellowships may witness a small “exodus” of various families and people to these large *Sukkot* gatherings—away from the focus of their local congregational body and plans. Likewise, the sheer size of many of these large *Sukkot* gatherings at rural campgrounds, means that properly monitoring things becomes impossible, and there can inevitably be some kind of an incident among the attendees.

Sukkot

Monitoring this since the late 1990s, we do know of several large Feast of Tabernacles gatherings where the testimony to the local Christian community is not that people are being changed by the Lord and receiving a greater portion of His Holy Spirit. Attendees often return to their home congregations from these functions having heard various sensationalistic teachings (usually about end-time predictions), complicating what the local leader must teach on with a new Torah cycle preparing to begin.

The Feast of Tabernacles is a wonderful time for Messianic people to consider our Heavenly Father's desire to commune with us in a very real way. None of us should forget the Apostle John's teaching about Yeshua's Incarnation: "the Word became flesh, and did tabernacle among us" (John 1:14a, YLT). As a ministry, we encourage *Sukkot* to be a time of both family and congregational bonding. It is a time when Messianic fellowships can minister to the local community by having a *sukkah* on their congregational property, and where families can have a *sukkah* in their backyards. Just as the Lord invites us to dwell with Him, so can we invite our friends, neighbors, and colleagues to dwell with us during the week. *Sukkot* is a time when we remember the rural conditions of the Ancient Israelites in a very cosmopolitan way.