

Temporary Shelter: Succoth

"And the Children of Israel removed from Rameses and pitched at Succoth" Numbers 33:5.

In 1940 and 1941, Hitler's infamous Third Reich seemed unstoppable. His armies, tanks and blitzkrieg ("lightning war") attacks overwhelmed Eastern Europe and blazed through France, and many of the surrounding countries. Night after night German bombers relentlessly pounded London. To many, it looked as though all of Europe would fully succumb to the emblazoned Nazi standard.

In March of 1941, Hitler stood before a crowd of German people and triumphantly cited his successful military conquests as proof of his might and great power. "See my people, we do not need anything from God! We do not ask anything from Him except that He may let us alone. We want to fight our own war, with our own guns, without God. We want to gain our victory without the help of God."



Yet, history bears record of how the arrogant leader was brought down. Hitler's pride was brought low, like it says in Psalm 37:35-36:

"I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found."

Rather than arrogantly exalting ourselves like a green bay tree, we are compared to a lowly bramble. Just as the ordinary bramble cannot do anything noteworthy, so we, without Yahweh's Presence can do

nothing of value. But with Him in our lives, we can “do all things,” as it says in Philippians 4:13 and John 15:5-7.

As long as Moses was even remotely in “green-bay-tree-mode,” Yahweh couldn’t use him to deliver Israel. The arrogant prince of Egypt had to be “laid to rest,” that a meek and lowly bramble might arise. This transformation required forty years of sheep herding to accomplish. But finally the day came when Moses no longer felt he could do it all himself. It was then that Yahweh called him.

Significantly, Moses’ calling to lead Israel out of bondage began with a bramble bush. In nearly every way, the bush appeared to be a commonplace shrub, but, Moses knew it was extraordinary at first glance. Why? It was on “Fire,” yet it was not consumed! Here we find a beautiful symbol of what all submitted followers of Yahweh may become. The thorn bush, brush, and bramble; symbolize the sinner, doomed to be cast into the final fire. Yet, by the power of God this ordinary bramble was enabled to host Yahweh’s all-consuming Presence.



It was as if Yahweh was saying: "You may be only a common bramble bush; but I am the Eternal Fire. When I Am in you, you are empowered to do the impossible." What would have been unattainable goals for this human bramble bush alone, Yahweh accomplished through Moses with great power. Similarly, the burning bush is a visible metaphor of Yahweh’s transformation of an ordinary life. It is through the purifying and indwelling work of the Holy Spirit that Yahweh prepares us for a kingly priesthood.

ISRAEL: THE FIRST BORN SON

During his encounter with Yahweh in the burning bush, Moses received his marching orders. He was to go to Egypt, speak to Pharaoh, and bring about circumstances and events which would bring Yahweh’s people out of that land of bondage. Plainly portraying

Yahweh's loving regard for the downtrodden Israelites, Moses had been instructed to inform Pharaoh:

Thus saith the LORD, Israel is My son, even My first born... Exodus 4:22

"Real Heavenly sonship is not dependent upon your parents' bloodline, but is bestowed through the merits of your Saviour's Blood!"

How can a motley band of cynical slaves be called Yahweh's "First Born Son"? To be looked upon by Heaven as a cherished child was already astounding enough. But the title of "First Born Son" depicted a bond far deeper than familial love alone. According to Scripture, the first born received the spiritual birthright and blessing. Also, he was to be the inheritor of the Father's possessions. By elevating a band of bondsmen to the exalted state of "First Born Sons," Yahweh showed yet again how He can take human brambles and transform them through His might.

Even the mixed multitude, adopted into the tribes, were all together identified as "First Born," and "Israel." Similarly, when we believe that Yahweh is God, and Moses is His servant to lead us out of bondage (through the Torah), we also become His "First Born." Our title of "first born" is not based upon physical birth, but spiritual rebirth. Furthermore, "Israel" is not formed of physical seed, but is comprised of spiritual seed, namely "those who prevail with God." Real Heavenly sonship is not dependent upon your parents' bloodline, but is bestowed through the merits of your Saviour's Blood!

Actually, even in the days of ancient Israel, the concept of "First Born Son" was predominantly spiritual. Deuteronomy 21:15-17 describes the inheritance laws God gave to Israel, but they were known long before Moses recorded them. Jacob and Esau had parted company over the birthright.² The birthright went to the second born, which apparently contradicted this God-ordained inheritance law, if regarded as a physical or material position. Notably, this replacement of the literal First Born with a spiritual one is not an isolated incident. Isaac

replaced Ishmael, the literal first born. Jacob superseded Esau. Judah lead instead of Ruben. And it was David who was crowned rather than Eliab. Why was the latter born given the spiritual blessing and double portion of the inheritance, in these cases? The words of Samuel hold the clue:

The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart, 1 Samuel 16:7b.

The “seed of Abraham” (Galatians 3:29) has always been about spiritual birth. Thus, the individual who acknowledges and serves Yahweh wholeheartedly is called His “first born,” regardless of natural birth order.

They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed, Romans 9:8.

BLOOD UPON THE DOORPOSTS

Very early in their deliverance experience, the Children of Israel were given an object lesson depicting their status under Yahshua’s Blood. Those “who prevailed with God” were not secure in the merits of their obedience alone, but in the merits of the blood placed upon the doorway of their homes.

And the blood shall be to you for a token (a sign or symbol) upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over (to spare) you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial: and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations (the cycles of measurable time); ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance (law, statute) forever (to the vanishing point), Exodus 12:13-14, emphasis supplied.

This language of “passing over” appears once more, in Isaiah 31:5, where the appeal goes out to those who will turn back to the LORD, put away their idols, and fear not the roar of the enemy. For these

spiritually respondent ones, Yahweh will “pass over” with protection “in that day” (Isaiah 3:4-7). This imagery seems to suggest an ultimate “Passover” during the apocalyptic plagues, of which the plagues of Egypt were but a shadow. We will return to this theme in a later volume.

The salvation offered for safe passage out of Egypt was as conditional then as now. To every household where the blood was applied upon the doorposts, and where the lamb was eaten, as God commanded—to that household, “salvation” was secure. The blood on the doorposts symbolized justification; which is the process of being made just as if we had not sinned, through the sacrifice of Yahshua, Heaven’s Perfect Lamb. The eating of the lamb symbolized sanctification. Sanctification is the process of being transformed and set apart for holy use, a work the Son of God performs in every life where He reigns supreme. But the Blood does not apply itself, nor the Lamb force His Presence uninvited. Only to him who believes strongly enough to obey, is the promise secure. The Way contains the guarantee of deliverance; individual choice is the variable.

MOTIVATION TO MOVE

But the blood on the doorpost of homes in the land of Goshen was not sprinkled there purely out of repentance, consecration, and restoration to the God of their fathers. There was the element of fear of the consequences if they did not obey the message through Moses, and he turned out to be right! After all, they had witnessed the power of Yahweh in the plagues upon the land. There loomed before them the very real possibility that on the morrow their first-born would be dead! The fear factor, although not a long-lasting motivator, is rarely active today. Yet the Scriptures are clear in warning of the doom awaiting all who are not covered under the Blood:

Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish, Luke 13:3.

He that believeth not is condemned already, John 3:18.

He that believeth not shall be damned, Mark 16:16.

That they all may be damned who believe not. 2 Thessalonians 2:12.

When the house is on fire, a measure of fear motivates us to seek escape! It is interesting that throughout Scripture we are repeatedly instructed not to fear. But, while we are never to fear people, or demons, our relationship with Yahweh begins by fearing Him! Fear is the beginning of wisdom:

"The Fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom..."

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do His commandments: His praise endureth for ever. Psalm 111:10

So what is the “fear of the LORD” referenced in Psalm 111:10? The word “fear” is translated from the Hebrew word יִרְאָה (*yir'âh*) meaning, “fear (also used as an infinitive); morally reverence: - X dreadful, exceedingly, fear (-fulness).”¹² The kind of reverent fear we are to have as we begin our walk with God is the first level of true worship. For useful fear is a true awareness of our condition and need, as well as a belief in Yahweh’s ability to carry out His Word.

While fear is the first motivator in our pursuit of deliverance, it does not remain our inspiration very long. Just as the Psalmist said, the fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom. But, as wisdom grows in our knowledge of Yahweh, we quickly move into our next driving force: a grateful heart. Responsive gratitude toward the Deliverer must motivate continuance through the desert trek. So it was that the mixed multitude of slaves were moved through a variety of motivations.

TRANSITION AT SUCCOTH

The bondage of Egypt behind them and their bread dough wrapped in women’s aprons, the tense and tired nomads set up their first camp at *Succoth*, meaning “temporary shelter” or “booths.” “*Sukkot*” in the Egyptian language stood for the place of “transition,” the coming out of darkness into the dawn of a mysterious new beginning. In Hebrew, this name stands for a quick rise from the lowest level to the highest.¹³ Not only had the new nation moved quickly from a “low state” to a

high one, but we, too, move from a "lost-in-slavery" state, to a state of being "free-in-Yahshua," when we begin the spiritual Exodus.

"Consider the literal meaning of the word *Sukkah*," says the Sfas Emes. "While it is customarily translated as 'hut,' it may also be related to the word 'Socheh' -- to gaze ahead (i.e. to peer into the future). The *Sukkah* calls upon its occupants to shed their physical limitations, look beyond shortcomings, and achieve their full potential"¹⁴ This can only happen through a relationship with the Messiah, the Deliverer from Egypt.

The newly identified Israel traveled to *Succoth* with their livestock and children, leaving their former homes and farms in the land of Rameses of Goshen. About twenty-five miles from Rameses, Succoth was the place where the sons of Israel paused to retrieve the bones of Joseph from his tomb at *Karnak* (Exodus 12:37; 13:19).

Succoth was a military base on the eastern border of Egypt, large enough for this great number of people and flocks to assemble and organize into ranks, or tribes. They would then be able to depart from Egypt's border in an orderly fashion by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea (Exodus 13:18). "The line of fortifications which was intended to keep the Bedouins out of the Delta, was approached and crossed without incident. The fortification line consists of a wall strengthened by small towers, which formed an obstruction most found difficult to pass."¹⁵

Because it was characterized by immense areas suited to assembly, *Succoth* was the spot the formidable Egyptian army used to assemble in preparation for their military expeditions to the north.¹⁶ Yet right here, under their military noses, so-to-speak, Moses quickly organized the Children of Israel. Significantly, the end is being told from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). We might wonder how Moses got past these guardhouses with nearly three million people plus millions of livestock and, countless wagons.

And how is it that this part of the Exodus story is largely untold in Scripture? Perhaps it was not mentioned because the Red Sea crossing eclipsed its significance. But moving so many escaping ex-slaves right by one of Egypt's largest military bases must have involved a

great miracle. Perhaps it was akin to Yahweh bringing a deep sleep upon the Midianites as Gideon and his band approached in the night.

The Scriptures state that the Children of Israel left Egypt the night of the Passover (which is actually the first day of Unleavened Bread, as the evenings precede the mornings in a biblical day). The Passover was followed by the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread. Little detail is recorded until it is later explained in Leviticus. Here we find that the congregation should eat unleavened bread at this time of the year, in commemoration of eating it during their deliverance from Egypt.

And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this self same day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance forever. . . .⁴²It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations, Exodus 12:17, 42.



As the prior map shows, when the Children of Israel had departed from *Rameses* and assembled at *Succoth*, they were OUT of Egypt proper. And it was at *Succoth* that we find the dedication of the ransomed males.

Sanctify unto Me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is Mine, Exodus 13:2.

Succoth, “temporary dwellings” and the place of “looking into the future,” the point of transition between darkness and light bears hidden meaning to those in the final “Exodus.” It lends additional food for thought as the application is made to the life of *Yahshua*. Our Saviour was born in a *succoth*, a temporary shelter, near *Bethlehem*, “the house of bread.” *Mesiah*, as the Bread of Heaven, came down to be the Bread of Life to us as we look into the future with Him:

“Succoth... (is) the point of transition between darkness and light.”

Then (Yahshua) said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but My Father giveth you the True Bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. I am the Bread of Life, John 6:32-33,35a.

Significantly to both ancient and modern Israel, this first stop, or stage, in the wilderness journey was on the Egyptian side of the Red Sea. Not everything of Egypt was gone from their lives. Thus, the Week of Unleavened Bread which began with *Passover*, symbolized exodus from the sin-tainted trappings of Egypt. The parallel applies both in time and event. Trekking from *Goshen* across the *Sinai Peninsula* to the Red Sea crossing took eight days, but the camping places between the two are not recorded. Only the campsites that fit the types and antitypes for the Last Days are scripturally labeled. Thus we, who whole-heartedly search for end-time Truth, may find the pathway for our own Exodus from spiritual Egypt.

Many of the lessons of *Succoth* are quiet ones. If we were not earnestly seeking them, they would easily escape our notice. For example, the Children of Israel needed to stop at Succoth to fulfill a promise made to Joseph. They stopped there to retrieve Joseph's bones. His remains had been left here in a tomb, with instructions, that they be carried by his tribe into the Promised Land. But, in taking Joseph's body with them on their journey to the Promised Land, we find an interesting End-Time parallel. The dead-in-Christ do not precede the body of Israel to their destination. This element in the story is actually a prophecy of the dry bones of the True Israel



(those who prevail with Yahweh), who will arise in the latter days to inherit the Promised Land. A mixed multitude of Jews and Gentiles come to Life as the essence of Joseph's life of faithfulness to the God of his fathers.¹⁷ Joseph is a type of the "dead in Christ" who enter the Heavenly Canaan with the living saints.

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (precede) them which are asleep. 1 Thessalonians 4:15.

At Sinai, Yahweh later reminded the people to commemorate the beginning of their sojourn at *Succoth*. The concept of spiritual travelers dwelling in *sukkahs* (temporary shelters) has since been remembered during the Feast of Tabernacles. As a reminder of the shelters used throughout their wanderings in the wilderness, Yahweh's followers still use temporary shelters during the eight-day celebration as a memorial of "going home."

What does it mean to us to be "going Home"? It means that by faith we have placed the Blood on the doorposts of our hearts, have eaten the emblems of His Sacrifice, and have put away sin. Through

Yahshua's indwelling grace, we have prepared to enter a new life with Christ as our Saviour, Master, and Spiritual Guide. We, spiritually, experience our *Succoth* as we walk out of the darkness, trusting God's Word and our loving Leader, as we face the unknown.

PARALLELS TO THE LAST DAYS

In addition to the spiritual application, which we may make from the campsites of the Children of Israel during these forty years, we may follow a figurative parallel during the last 40-days on Earth. If this proves to be true, we may expect to literally live, during that time, in temporary shelters, "under His wings" in "His pavilion." Having gathered what provisions we can carry, we will enjoy the manna He provides. Our bread and water miraculously supplied, we will be spiritually and physically protected while the wicked rage over the possibility that the fire of God with us, may "torch" their lives.

Even the Book of Revelation uses the same symbols associated with this journey of Israel through the wilderness. For example, Revelation 12:1-6 talks about the people of God as a "woman" being taken into the wilderness for 1260 days, which



is forty-two months. These forty-two months will cover the forty-two-encampment-experiences of God's people in their wilderness. This woman of Revelation will be carried on "eagle's wings,"¹⁸ and in Exodus 19:4 we hear Yahweh telling His people in the first Exodus, that they were being carried on eagle's wings through their experience.

Indeed, we may find several fulfillments of the forty-two-campsite-character-challenges and their applications to us, as previously suggested:

1. In the actual Exodus of God's people out of Egypt
2. In the life of Yahshua Himself
3. In world history
4. In the life of every sojourner in route to the Heavenly Canaan.¹⁹

There is a pattern that appears in each domain. Of these listed, the first and last will be our main focus in this series of books; however, there are sketches of the Saviour's pathway and world events throughout the forty-two-camp-illustrations, if one keeps that in mind. Yahshua told His disciples:

And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, Luke 24:44-46.

As Yahshua came out of Egypt to fulfill prophecy (Matthew 2:15), and we are to walk in His steps (1 Peter 2:21), we may grasp the three-fold meaning of this journey through the wilderness. His seven-fold promise to them, is for us as well:

1. I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, Exodus 6:8a
2. I will deliver you from their bondage, Exodus 6:6b
3. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and great judgments, Exodus 6:6c
4. I will take you for My people, Exodus 6:7a
5. I will be your God, Exodus 6:7b
6. I will bring you to the land, Exodus 6:8a
7. I will give the land to you for a possession, Exodus 6:8b²⁰

To those who enter the Covenant with Him, Yahweh’s seven-fold promise still applies: I will bring you out of darkness, and free you from the soul-ties of bondage. I will lead you into My redemption by My outstretched arm, and by great judgments. I will take you to be My people and I will be your God. I will guide you to the heavenly Canaan and give you the New Earth for your possession.

If we would partake of these Covenant blessings, we need to begin with the attitude of *Succoth*. We leave spiritual Egypt behind and move quickly into the transition from darkness into light. We view the world as a temporary dwelling place. But our backs are to the Egypt we’ve left behind and our eyes and hearts are fixed on a Better Land.

"This world is not my home,
I'm just a pass'n through;
My treasures are laid up
Somewhere beyond the blue."²¹



SUMMARY OF CHAPTER ONE

- Yahweh cannot use people in self-sufficient “green-bay-tree-mode.” We are to be humble instruments of God, working mightily through the indwelling Presence of Yahweh, as is emblemized in the burning bramble bush.
- The term “Israel” **never** applied primarily to a race or a human bloodline. It has always been about a spiritual calling. Then and now, true Israel are those who “prevail with God,” regardless of nationality or claim.
- *Sukkoth* means “temporary dwellings” and the “point of transition between darkness and light.” It is a calling for us to acknowledge that this world is not our home. It is a dividing point where, to progress, we must leave spiritual darkness behind and enter Yahweh’s marvelous light.

- When we decide to leave spiritual Egypt, and journey to Canaan, we enter the Covenant between true Israel and Yahweh.
- For those of the Covenant, Yahweh's offers a seven-fold promise: 1) He will bring us out of darkness. 2) He will free us from the soul-ties of bondage. 3) He will lead us into His redemption by His outstretched arm. 4) He will take us to be His people. 5) And He will be our, personal, God. 6) He will guide us to the heavenly Canaan. 7) And He will give us the New Earth for our possession.