

SUKKOT 5787

FUSION
WITH RABBI JASON



with
Rabbi Jason Sobel

5787 - THE YEAR OF OPEN WINDOWS

TORAH PORTIONS
Sukkot 5787



THIS WEEK'S TORAH PORTIONS

LEVITICUS 22:26–23:44

Sukkot 5787 / סוכות

In this weeks guide...

COMMENTARY..... 1

The joy of Sukkot is here! This holiday reminds us that our security has never really been found in the things we build or accumulate. Israel lived in temporary shelters in the wilderness, but ADONAI was with them and provided what they needed. The festival is a personal call for us to remember God's faithfulness, rejoice in His presence, and look forward to the day when He will dwell with us in the fullness of His Kingdom!

NEW TESTAMENT TIE-IN..... 2

Sometimes, the Bible's odd passages generate the BEST questions! For example, why does the Torah require that a sacrificial animal remain with its mother for seven days before it can be offered on the eighth? This week's tie-in leans into one such text and suggests connections that give us a vivid picture of covenant, sacrifice, and the new life we receive through Messiah.

HEBREW WORD STUDY..... 3

If you've been to Israel, you may remember the word, "Todah." This Hebrew word means "thank you" or "thanksgiving." However, todah involves more than simply feeling grateful. Throughout Scripture, todah is expressed openly through words, worship, offerings, and generosity. It reminds us that biblical gratitude means recognizing God's faithfulness and then actually doing something with that gratitude.

OVER VIEW

Sukkot is a biblical holiday celebrated on the 15th day of the month of Tishrei (late September to late October). It is one of the three biblically mandated festivals (Shalosh Regalim) on which Jews were commanded to make a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem. Christians typically refer to Sukkot as the "Feast of Tabernacles." The Hebrew word sukkot refers to a walled structure covered with plant material, such as overgrowth or palm leaves. A sukkah is the temporary dwelling in which farmers lived during harvest, a detail tied to the holiday's agricultural significance, as emphasized in the Book of Exodus.

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Staff Contributor

COMMENTARY

Sukkot marks the high point of the biblical festival calendar. After the awe of Rosh Hashanah and the repentance of Yom Kippur, *ADONAI* offers more than forgiveness; He invites His people into joy. The Torah shifts from solemn gatherings to celebration, showing us that redemption leads to connection. Holiness is not just avoiding sin, but most importantly living in the presence of G-d.

Leviticus 23 lists the special times set by *ADONAI*, ending with the Feast of Booths. Israel is told to live in temporary shelters for seven days so each generation remembers how the Holy One made the people of Israel live in booths after leaving Egypt. Remembering is at the heart of biblical faith. We remember not to stay stuck in the past, but to see the faithfulness of the One who brought us through it.

The sukkah teaches us in a simple way. Its walls are fragile, and its roof is left somewhat open, letting us see the sky. Every meal inside reminds us that our safety has never depended on buildings, money, or power. Our true security comes from the faithfulness of *ADONAI*. The people in the wilderness survived not because the desert was easy, but because G-d was with them. Their real shelter was His presence.

This message is just as important for us today. We all want things to be stable and secure. But Sukkot gently shows us that these feelings can be misleading. It reminds us that we are travelers before we are settlers. Our homes, jobs, and belongings are good gifts, but they are not our true refuge. Like Abraham, we walk by faith, looking forward to the city that G-d has designed and built.

For those who believe Yeshua is the Messiah, Sukkot means even more. John's Gospel says, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." This language reminds us of living in tents, showing that G-d has always wanted to be close to His people. The temporary booths in Israel point to something more significant: Emmanuel—G-d with us.

But this is not the end of the story. Sukkot also looks ahead to the coming Kingdom, when the prophets say all nations will come to Jerusalem to worship the King. Today, we celebrate by remembering the wilderness, rejoicing in Messiah's presence, and looking forward to the day when G-d will live with humanity forever.

As we sit in our sukkot this week, let each branch above us remind us that our homes are temporary, but *ADONAI*'s faithfulness lasts forever. Our greatest security is not in the shelter we build, but in the presence of the G-d who is with us.

New Testament Tie-In

Let's be honest: sometimes the Bible is odd. When passages of Scripture are at their most bizarre, they're often the most helpful because they create an opportunity for us to pause and ask good questions.

Exhibit A:

ADONAI spoke to Moses, saying: "When a bull, a sheep or a goat is born, then it is to remain seven days with its mother, and from the eighth day onward it will be accepted as the gift of an offering made by fire to *ADONAI*." (Leviticus 22.26–27)

These opening verses of this week's *parsha* address (in detail) one of the more unusual dimensions of Israelite worship—animal sacrifice. Did you notice the highly specific timelines here? Stillness for seven days and then ACTION! An "offering made by fire."

In the context of Torah, what other significant action takes place on the eighth day of life?

Then *ADONAI* spoke to Moses, saying: "Speak to *Bnei-Yisrael*, instructing: If a woman conceives and bears a male child, then she will be unclean for **seven days**, as in the days of her *niddah* she will be unclean. In the **eighth day** the flesh of his foreskin is to be circumcised." –Leviticus 12.1–3 (*emphasis added*)

According to Genesis 17.11, God commanded this rite as "a sign of the covenant" between him and Abraham. Of course, as a faithful son of Abraham, *Yeshua* was circumcised on the eighth day (see Luke 2.21). Can I suggest that there is another highly significant "eighth day event" in *Yeshua's* story, and these events are linked?

According to the Gospels, God raised his Son from the dead on Sunday—the "first day of the week." In one sense, as Saturday is the seventh day of the week, Sunday can be seen as the eighth. Might there be a connection between *Yeshua's* circumcision and resurrection?

Remember Genesis 17 ... covenant is at the heart of this rite. The Lord's resurrection came after his death, the event that created the ultimate covenant between God and humanity (see Luke 22.20). Blood was shed in Genesis 17, and blood was shed on the cross. And the book of Hebrews powerfully links the cross and our *parsha*, For if the **blood of goats and bulls** and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will **the blood of Messiah**—who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God—cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God? –Hebrews 9.13–14 (*emphasis added*)

But wait ... there's more!

Animal sacrifice *and* male circumcision on the eighth day speak directly to your life in Messiah! How? Our baptism in water connects us to the two "eighth day events" in *Yeshua's* life. And in Him **you were also circumcised** with a circumcision performed without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, **having been buried with Him in baptism**, in which **you were also raised with Him** through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. –Colossians 2.11–12 (*nasb emphasis added*)

When you read about a bull being sacrificed on the eighth day, remember *Yeshua's* "eighth day events." Remember your own baptism, that glorious moment when you "were buried together with Him through immersion into death—in order that just as Messiah was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6.4).

Aren't you glad for "odd" Bible verses?

Hebrew Word Study

Todah [תודה] / "thank you; to confess"

The Hebrew word "todah" comes from "yada," which means "to extend the hand, to give thanks, to confess." Todah is more than just a feeling. It is gratitude shown openly, a public acknowledgment of God's goodness that often takes the form of worship and offering. In the Hebrew Scriptures, todah is a visible, shared act that recognizes every blessing as coming from God.

The earliest and most significant appearance of todah is in the sacrificial system. Leviticus instructs:

"If he offers it for a thanksgiving (todah), then he is to offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving unleavened cakes mixed with oil..." (Leviticus 7:12, TLV)

The todah sacrifice is different from sin or guilt offerings because it comes from a heart deeply moved by God's faithfulness. It is a joyful way to respond to God's help or blessing, shown through worship and shared with others. In this setting, gratitude leads to generosity and celebration together.

The Psalms elevate todah as a principal mode of worship:

"Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise! Give thanks to Him, bless His Name." (Psalm 100:4, TLV)

Thanksgiving is the way into God's presence. Before asking for help or sharing sorrow, worshipers remember what God has done, turning their attention from their own needs to God's faithfulness. The psalmist also encourages this

"Offer God a sacrifice of thank offerings, and fulfill your vows to Elyon." (Psalm 50:14, TLV)

"Give thanks to *ADONAI* for He is good, for His lovingkindness endures forever." (Psalm 107:1, TLV)

Biblical thanksgiving is always expressed in words or deeds. It is a way to tell others about God's great works so they can trust Him too.

The prophets looked ahead to a time when God's people would be known for their thanksgiving:

"The voice of joy and the voice of gladness... the voice of those who bring thanksgiving offerings into the House of *ADONAI*." (Jeremiah 33:11, TLV)

"Through Him, then, let us continually offer up to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips giving thanks to His Name." (Hebrews 13:15, TLV)

Thanksgiving is now a constant, spiritual offering. It is shown through worship, obedience, and generosity. Instead of being limited to an altar, it is lived out by every believer.

Todah helps fight fear and dissatisfaction. When we remember how God has been faithful in the past, we gain confidence for the future. Every breath, meal, and challenge is a chance to see God's care. Practicing todah means admitting that every gift comes from above, every mercy is undeserved, and every promise is based on God's steady character. This kind of thanksgiving is more than good manners; it is an act of faith that praises God in every season. A thankful heart becomes a place of worship, and each day is received as a gift from the Lord, whose love never ends.

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Rabbi Jason & Fusion Global present
HEBREW WORD STUDY

תודה

תודה / Todah / thank you; thanksgiving

תודה (todah) encompasses thanksgiving, praise, and confession. In the approximately thirty-two Old Testament occurrences, it describes both verbal expressions (spoken or sung) and physical offerings presented to the LORD. The contexts revolve around worship, sacrifice, testimony, and prophetic vision.

The todah sacrifice points to the New Covenant “sacrifice of praise” (Hebrews 13:15). It anticipates Yeshua’s once-for-all atonement. The early church’s breaking of bread and prayers echo the pattern: gratitude expressed both verbally and around a shared meal.

Adapted fr. Lexical Summary at biblehub.org

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THOUGHTS for REFLECTION

Take some time this week to prayerfully consider and discuss with friends:

- During Sukkot, we leave the security of our permanent homes and spend time in a fragile sukkah. What are some of the things you tend to look to for security? How can this festival help us remember that our deepest security is ultimately found in God's presence?
- Sukkot comes after the intense and holy days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and brings us into a season of rejoicing. Why do you think joy is such an important part of our relationship with God? Do you find it easier to focus on repentance and spiritual growth than on simply rejoicing in His goodness?

GLOBAL

**Next week, Shemini Atzeret (the 8th day of the holiday) falls on Shabbat (October 3rd). The Torah reading for that day is Deuteronomy 14:22-16:17. The following week (October 4-10), we start a new Torah reading cycle with Parashat Beresheet. Those readings are included below:*

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: *Beresheet / פרשת בראשית*

TORAH

Sunday: Genesis 1:1-2:3
Monday: Genesis 2:4-19
Tuesday: Genesis 2:20-3:21
Wednesday: Genesis 3:22-4:18
Thursday: Genesis 4:19-22
Friday: Genesis 4:23-5:24
Saturday: Genesis 5:25-6:8

Prophetic Reading (*Haftarah*): Isaiah 42:5-43:10

New Covenant Reading: Matthew 24:29-36

Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the Tree of Life Version.