

2025-10-11 Sukkot at CSY Following the Pillar (Amude) of Cloud & Fire

Welcome & Intro

Today is the 5th day of Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths

Sukkot is the only time we're commanded by the Lord to rejoice

How can we rejoice in a world that is so full of tsuris, lies, sin, sorrow?

By remembering our ancestors living in temporary dwellings

Wandering in desert

God's presence among them as a pillar of cloud & fire to lead us

Remembering that we too are being led on a journey by Ruach Ha Kodesh

Sukkot is also a harvest festival, after fruit harvest, the final harvest of the year

Time to express gratitude for the many blessings we do have

Origin of America's Thanksgiving Day

We're instructed by the Lord to give thanks by waving branches & fruit

In Biblical times there was rejoicing because Sukkot is 5 days after Yom Kippur

Rejoicing in knowledge of their sin being atoned for

We are rejoicing now for Messiah's once & for all atonement

We have another reason to rejoice this year

Hostages will be released Monday or Tuesday

In an amazing co-incidence/Godincidence Monday 7th day of Sukkot

Is Hoshannah Rabba – the day of the Great Prayer for salvation

Starts at sundown Sunday & lasts until sundown Monday

We've been praying for spiritual salvation for Israel

But amazingly there will be physical salvation for the hostages

Who will be released on this day of salvation

Give thanks by worshipping together waving branches & fruit in thanksgiving

Wave offerings are commanded by the Lord in Torah

When you wave your palm branch before the Lord it is a prophetic act

Word for spirit in Hebrew is Ruakh, same word for wind

You are stirring up the Ruakh, spirit, your spirit & God's Holy Spirit

Wave as you feel led as we worship

At the end of the message we're going to go out and finish the service in the sukkah

Leviticus 23:40 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 (the LORD) your God for seven days.

Picture #1

What is the reason for rejoicing? It's a harvest festival, celebrated to the Lord

Thanking God for the harvest reminds us we are dependent on Him

We forget this truth in our urban society

Our American Thanksgiving has become about turkeys and football

While the Temple was still standing Sukkot became time

Of prayer for rain for coming year

Monday night we'll pour out water around the Sukkah

Pray for rain for next year, physical & spiritual rain

We have also learned there is Biblical evidence Yeshua was born on Sukkot

God dwelling temporarily among men in human form

& Prophet Zechariah tells us the Millennial Kingdom will begin on Sukkot

When Yeshua will reign from Jerusalem over the whole world

& people from all the nations will come to Jerusalem to worship Lord

Just before the October 7th massacre on 1st day of Sukkot in 2023 in Jerusalem

People from all the nations marched in Jerusalem

As a prophetic demonstration of what will happen in the Millennium

Play video from flash drive

You can find my teachings on these subjects on Youtube & podcast

Leviticus 23:41 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,

Booths – Sukkot, booth – Sukkah

Picture

43 so that your generations may know that I had Bnei-Yisrael (the Sons of Israel) to dwell in sukkot when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. I am Adonai your God.”

Why live in Sukkot? To remember our ancestor's had to live in Sukkot 40 years

When we came out of Egypt

Traditionally the meaning of the Sukkah is shown in

The purposely flimsy structure of the Sukkah

Not supposed to be made sturdily

A roof of branches that you can see the stars though

Which of course would let the rain through

Traditional construction is to remind us of our dependence on God

According to all the laws of nature our Israelite ancestors

Should have perished in the desert

God is Adonai Yireh, the Lord our Provider

He supplied all our ancestor's needs supernaturally in desert for 40 years

Fed them by quail and manna, drank water from rocks

Their clothing & shoes didn't wear out

Spiritual application: bodies are really just Sukkot –temporary structures

Dependent on Him today even though we're not wandering in a desert

In our urban, modern society we tend to think our provision

Is the grocery store, our job, government, family

We don't realize how many of our needs God is supplying right now

He holds every atom in the universe together

He created all life, designing it to live & reproduce

During Sukkot it has been my practice

To spend some time in Sukkah every day

Thought about our ancestors Sukkot wandering in the desert

Ruach Ha Kodesh revealed their sukkot were not at all like a traditional sukkah

First, the Exodus sukkot or dwelling tents were not porous

Tabernacle was covered with waterproof animal skins

Picture of tabernacle

Wouldn't tents they lived in have been water and wind proof?

So, I asked the Lord what **are** we supposed to remember?

Why were our ancestors living in Sukkot, temporary dwellings?

Looked at the account of the Exodus & answer was simple & clear

Following 430 years of slavery & 10 plagues Egyptians let our people go

Exodus 12:37 Then Bnei-Yisrael journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about 600,000 men on foot, as well as children.

At least 3M people including women & children, mind boggling

They were escaping civilized Egypt into a barren desert

This was a refugee crisis beyond any we've seen in our day

Took great courage, commitment to go, great faith built by miraculous plagues

People's faith was challenged -would you go or remain safely in bondage?

The next day

Exodus 13:20 So they journeyed from Succoth and encamped in Etham, on the edge of the wilderness.

Verse showed me real reason for living in Sukkot – Israelites were **travelling**

Their dwellings had to be **portable, not flimsy**

21 Adonai went before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead the way and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light.

So they could travel both day and night.

22 The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night never departed from the people.

Their travel was guided in a special way

Picture #3 – Ha Amude

This manifestation of God led the people where God wanted them to go

This is 1st mention of pillar of cloud & fire – amude ha anan v'ha aish

Amude – pillar, anan – cloud, aish - fire

So, **real** reason ancestors lived in Sukkot was so they could follow Ha Amude

God had a journey in store for them

They were going on an extended camping trip, led by this pillar of cloud & fire

If you've ever helped set up or take down our traditional sukkah, as I have

Our Sukkah

You realize it's definitely not something you'd want to take on a camping trip

6 men, 4 ladders, a dolly to roll the pieces on, screws, power drivers

Made of 8'X8' panels of 2X4s, very heavy, hard to carry

Can't imagine taking it down each morning, setting up again each evening

During the Exodus Israel's sukkot were portable

Not like modern back packing tents, but like ancient nomad's tents

So, they could follow Ha Amude, the Pillar of cloud & fire

Picture of nomad's tent with solar panels

From now on when we think Sukkah, we should no longer think **flimsy**

Think portable, say this with me – their sukkot were portable

Why did God lead them with Ha Amude the pillar of cloud & fire?

Ruach Ha Kodesh is God's way of leading us, Ruakh in Hebrew is spirit, breath, wind

Ruach Ha Kodesh came in fire on Yeshua's disciples on Shavuot

So pillar of cloud & fire was a manifestation of Ruach Ha Kodesh

The Ruakh, or wind & the aish, or fire, being made visible to humans

I will use the pronoun He for Ha Amude rather than it because

Ha Amude is God Himself come in form of a Pillar of cloud & fire

Following Ha Amude, pillar, for Israelites was something they did as a nation

So a group can collectively follow Ruach Ha Kodesh, if each individual follows Him

11 years ago Congregation Shema Yisrael stepped out to follow Ha Amude

When we were asked by Pastor Doug of Edgewood Free Methodist Church

If we wanted to buy their facility

To follow Ha Amude where God each of us had to do our part

What is your part today? Follow Ha Amude as He guides you

God has instruction to help us follow Ha Amude

It is revealed in what our ancestors learned when they lived in Sukkot

& had to follow Ha Amude, God guiding them in a pillar of cloud & fire

Go through account in Torah to learn how to follow Ha Amude

Watch for ways this instruction applies to each of you

& to all of us together as a congregation

Not going to read specific verses for sake of time but will reference them

Encourage you to read the account in Exodus & Numbers

Exodus 13 Israelites followed the pillar out of Egypt

3M people left, walking out into a forbidding desert, **totally committed**

Facing danger, leaving homes, most possessions, comforts behind

1st lesson: following Ha Amude requires total commitment

They were escaping cruel slavery, bondage in Egypt

2nd lesson: following Ha Amude frees you from bondage & leads to freedom

Exodus 14 – Egyptians changed their mind & pursued Israel

Israelites followed Ha Amude the pillar of cloud & fire to the Sea

Where they appeared to be trapped by pursuing Egyptian army

People were in great fear & cried out to Moses

3rd lesson: following Ha Amude isn't stress free

Following Ha Amude takes great courage, you will need courage

Ha Amude stood between Israel & the Egyptian army

Then the Lord parted the sea, Israelites went through on dry ground

Picture #4 looking back toward Egypt

Ha Amude was their rear guard

Keeping the Egyptian army from the people as they crossed sea

4th lesson: following Ha Amude you are protected from your enemies

Who are your enemies?

Spiritual forces opposing God's plan for you, to advance His Kingdom

After Israelites had entered the sea Egyptian army tried to follow

When Israelites had all come up out of the seabed the waters returned

Egyptian army was totally destroyed & Israelites celebrated their freedom

Picture of army being destroyed

5th lesson: Ha Amude will destroy your enemies

Then the pillar of cloud & fire led them 3 days without water

& then to a place where there was bitter water

Common expression in believing circles – following the glory cloud

Means going wherever God is moving mightily

Currently – where there's a revival, famous speaker, prophet, I'll be there

Nothing wrong with that, but Ha Amude also leads you into trials

Challenges, unknown territory, causing you to have to trust God

Which makes your trust or faith to grow

Because God is stretching each of us

When you're able to handle responsibility for some part of KofG

He will give you greater responsibility

When you're able to overcome the fear of taking a risk

To do something to bring God glory

He will lead you to overcome your fear of doing something even riskier

To bring Him greater glory

God told Moses to throw a piece of wood in water & it became sweet

And the people saw the glory of the Lord in this miracle

6th lesson: following Ha Amude leads to these difficult circumstances

But, they're for purpose -you'll see God's glory & learn to trust Him more

Exodus 16 The pillar led them into desert where they ran out of food

Again the people grumbled against Moses in this trial

God sent manna & quails to feed them to again show His glory

Then he tested them by instructing them to only gather manna 6 days

Keep the 7th day as a Shabbat

7th lesson: following Ha Amude leads to testing your obedience

Exodus 17 Israelites were attacked by Amalekites

This time Ha Amude didn't protect them like He did against Egyptians

They had to fight against Amalek themselves & defeat them

8th lesson: following Ha Amude leads to having to fight yourself

By stepping out in faith that God will give you the victory

So, trials of thirst, hunger, obedience & now being attacked

We can see following the pillar was not easy

You will have to fight in the spirit, spiritual warfare

Exodus 19 Pillar of cloud & fire led the people to Mt. Sinai

Picture of Mt. Sinai

We see Ha Amude on top of mountain as Lord descended on mountain

Exodus 20 God spoke 10 Commandments from mountain

& in Exodus 25 Brought Israel into a covenant relationship with Himself

9th lesson: following Ha Amude leads you into covenant relationship

With the God of Israel

Exodus 32 the people made & worshipped a golden calf

God said He could not go with the Israelites to their PL

Because His presence would consume the people because of their sin

Moses rebuked the people, interceded for them

God instructed Moses to build Tabernacle & set up the Levitical priesthood

So atoning sacrifices could be made to cover the Israelite's sin

So God's presence could go with them

Exodus 40 Moses set up the Tabernacle

Exodus 40:34 Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of Adonai filled the Tabernacle.

35 Moses was unable to enter into the Tent of Meeting, because the cloud resided there and the glory of Adonai filled the Tabernacle.

Picture

Ha Amude, pillar of cloud & fire was now over Tabernacle leading the people

Numbers 13 – Ha Amude led Israel to Kadesh Barnea on the border of the PL

10th lesson: following Ha Amude will lead you to your Promised Land, to fulfill your divine destiny

Numbers 14 people rebelled & refused to go into the PL & take the land

Result in Deuteronomy 2:1– circled Mount Se'ir for a long time – 40 years

Until the entire generation that refused to take the land died out

May we not be like those who turned away at Kadesh Barnea

Help us to deal with rebellion, fear within

Ha Amude led the Israelites to different places to teach them things

To increase their trust in God so they could conquer the PL

Enduring thirst, hunger even battles with other peoples

He was a visible manifestation of God on Earth for those 40 years

It was how they saw God, God spoke to them from Ha Amude

So, why did our ancestors live in Sukkot, temporary dwellings, tents?

Had to live in Sukkot, portable dwellings to follow Ha Amude

Because the pillar of cloud & fire kept moving

What about us today?

Romans 8:14 All who are led by God's Spirit are God's sons.

Following the pillar of cloud & fire, Ruach Ha Kodesh can be about

Physically moving your dwelling to another location

Becoming a missionary to Israel, Ethiopia

Should all of us who own homes sell them & buy RVs? No

For most of us our destiny is not about physical journeys, but spiritual ones

Every one of you needs to follow Ha Amude to fulfill your destiny

A journey through space, relationships, ministry, trials, victories

You need to see life as a journey, a constantly challenging adventure

If you're not on your journey you're not spiritually alive any more

You can't settle down, become apathetic, self satisfied, set in your ways

God has more for you, need to be ready to break down your portable sukkah

& follow His pillar through whatever changes He has for you

Most of us are called to follow Ha Amude **together**, as the Israelites did

As part of this congregation or some other one

Together, this congregation stepped out to follow Ha Amude 11 years ago

When Ruach Ha Kodesh opened a door to us when Edgewood Free Methodist Church invited us to buy this facility

In the natural we would have said "no thanks"

We can't afford your facility, we don't want to go into debt, etc.
 But, as we prayed about this open door we began to see Ha Amude
 Was leading us to step through that open door
 So we did, & Ruach Ha Kodesh began performing miracles for us
 Just as He did when the Israelites got out of Egypt on their way to PL
 12 amazing miracles occurred & each one strengthened our resolve
 To continue to follow Ha Amude, Ruach Ha Kodesh down this path
 Here are 4 of them, the \$.5M anonymous donation
 Edgewood Free Methodist Church turning down a much better offer that we were able to make
 Unanimous vote by Congregation Shema Yisrael's members to proceed
 Edgewood Free Methodist Church paying our fundraising consultant's fees
 These miracles were confirmations for us
 Like miracles the Israelites experienced were confirmations for them
 So, what about now that we've been here almost 5 years?
 Is Ha Amude still leading us? & if He is, **where** is He leading us?
Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no vision the people perish
 Inverse is also true, where there is vision from God
 The people flourish, bear fruit, advance the Kingdom of God
 To understand let's start with a verse we sing at end of every Shabbat service
Zachariah 14:9 Adonai will then be King over all the earth. In that day Adonai will be Echad and His Name Echad.
 Predicts that someday the Lord will be reigning as King over the entire world
 How will He come back to reign?
Mark 13:26 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with tremendous power and glory.
 How long will He reign?
Revelation 20:6 ... they will be cohanim of God and of the Messiah, and they will rule with him for the thousand years.
 What will His rule be like?
2 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan [the Adversary], and chained him up for a thousand years.
 With satan chained the world will have peace
Zachariah 14:16 Then all the survivors from all the nations that attacked Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, Adonai-Tzva'ot, and to celebrate Sukkot.
 All nations will come to Jerusalem to worship Yeshua
 It will happen during Sukkot & is our great hope for this broken world
 But, some things have to happen before that day
 Gospel preached to all the world & what Yeshua said had to happen in
Matthew 23:37 "Yerushalayim! Yerushalayim! You kill the prophets! You stone those who are sent to you! How often I wanted to gather your children, just as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but you refused!
 When Yeshua said this He was speaking to Jerusalem the capital of Israel
 Like we would speak to Washington, He went on to say
39 For I tell you, from now on, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of ADONAI.'"
 Barukh ha-ba b'shem Adonai – is how you greet an honored guest in Hebrew
 So Yeshua will not return until Jewish people in Jerusalem
 Greet Him with honor, declaring He is coming in the name of Adonai
 That is, that He is Messiah
 So, for Yeshua to return & fulfill our great hope of 1000 years of peace
 Jewish people in Jerusalem must come to believe He is Messiah
 Messianic Movement & Congregation Shema Yisrael consists of Jews & Gentiles whom God has called
 To reach Jewish people with the Good News
 We are motivated by a desire to bring about Yeshua's return
 & by a desire to reach our Jewish loved ones with Good News
 We have this motivation knowing we'll also reach non-Jewish people

As we fulfill this calling
 There are over 1000 churches in Monroe County
 But we are the only congregation called specifically to the Jewish people
 Our calling also includes discipling all whom Ruach Ha Kodesh draws to fellowship with us
 Jews & Gentiles
 What has happened concerning fulfilling this purpose since we moved here?
 Been much more effective because we are in the heart of the Jewish community
 3 minutes down the road from the JCC
 Our sign, Israeli flag, Sukkah, Menorah on the front lawn
 Our website, App, Facebook page online, our participation in local events
 & our direct outreaches at Public Market, NY State Fair, homeless
 Are ways we make our identity as a Messianic Jewish Congregation known
 Our existence & public visibility directly contradicts the false teaching
 Jewish people have received that you can't be Jewish & believe in Yeshua
 Because knowledge of our identity is spreading
 We've been getting many more Jewish visitors than we did on Winton Rd.
 Some raised Jewish, some with 1 Jewish parent, not raised Jewish
 Some whose Jewish identity had been hidden by parents
 The Lord also gave us 3 other assignments as part of our calling
 1st after moving here we learned that even though Brighton town is very woke
 There are many people in this town who are not woke
 Who believe the Bible & support its values
 But don't have a place to connect with other believers
 So, we have worked toward making our identity publicly known
 As a congregation that supports Biblical values
 How? By hosting American Seekers Academy & a candidates forum, our values tri-fold
 Teaching on Biblical values on livestream
 & we've seen many people, Jews & Gentiles join us because of our values
 2nd recently there has been a great increase in the number of believers
 Who want to connect with Jewish Roots of their Christian faith
 As a Messianic Jewish Congregation we are the ideal place to make that connection
 So, we have been making that aspect of our identity publicly known
 Through our teaching, online presence & community Moadim celebrations
 3rd we have been involved in healing and deliverance ministry for many years
 Recently we've been able to make that 3rd part of our identity known
 By hosting Be In Health Conferences, teaching on spiritual roots
 & we're seeing people connect with us because of this identity
 Praise the Lord I believe some who have joined us recently have experience
 & gifting in healing & deliverance
 So, it seems Ha Amude is strengthening us in this area of ministry
 Mentioned earlier following Ha Amude will lead us into covenant relationship
 With God of Israel & to fulfill our divine destiny to be effective
 In fulfilling our purpose, which we wrote down years ago
 Our purpose is to proclaim Messiah Yeshua (Jesus) to Jewish and non-Jewish people, connect them personally with the
 God of Israel through teaching, prayer, worship & fellowship, lead them to become spiritually mature, equip them to
 serve, and inspire believers everywhere to reconnect with their Jewish roots.
 What would cause us not to follow the pillar of cloud & fire?
 Fear of failure, unknown, confusion, laziness, pride, selfishness
 Spirits of division, contention, accusation, pride
 Question Ruach Ha Kodesh is asking all of us
 Do you see Ha Amude & where He is leading you?
 Are you willing to follow Him even if it means leaving the comfort of

The familiar & stepping out into unknown where there are many risks

Prayer

Thanks for Sukkot & its many lessons

Help us trust You have a plan, journey, path for each of us

Thank you that Ha Amude, Your Ruakh is wanting to guide us

Teach us to follow Ha Amude as our ancestors followed

Your pillar of cloud & fire

Thank you that Ha Amude is leading our congregation into our future

We understand You'll lead us into trials, challenges, battles

But also into fruitfulness, joy, victory, our destiny & fullness of Your promises

& eventually into our PL

Help us raise our commitment to building Your Kingdom

Free us from any bondages holding us back

Help us to see the trial we experience are meant to teach us to trust You more

Obey you more

Protect us from rising anti-Semitism, lead us in spiritual warfare

We break the power of fear of failure, the unknown, confusion, laziness,

Pride, selfishness, spirits of division, contention, accusation, pride