

Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



"Sukkot: Between Deliverance and the Promise"

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): Lev. 23:33–43; Ex. 6:6–8; Gen. 15:1; Deut. 8:2–18; Num. 9:15–23; 2 Sam. 7:1–16; Is. 7:14; 9:5–6; John 1:1–14; Rev. 7:14–17; 21:2–4

We tend to rejoice when the wilderness is over. We celebrate when the prayer has been answered, the door has opened, the provision has come, and we have finally reached the place we were hoping to reach. But Sukkot gives us a strange command: return to the wilderness—and rejoice **there**. After the solemn days of *Yom Teruah* and *Yom Kippur* comes *Z'man Simchateinu*, "the Season of Our Rejoicing." ADONAI commands Israel, "*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 your God for seven days*" (Lev. 23:40). Then, alongside the command to rejoice, He gives another command: leave the security of your permanent dwelling and live for seven days in a sukkah—a temporary, fragile shelter. "*You are to live in sukkot for seven days... so that your generations may know that I had Bnei-Yisrael to dwell in sukkot when I brought them out of the land of Egypt*" (Lev. 23:42–43). Rejoice—and remember the wilderness.

God brought Israel **from** somewhere, and He was bringing them **to** somewhere. He said, "*I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians... I will redeem you with an outstretched arm*" (Ex. 6:6), and then promised, "*I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob*" (Ex. 6:8). But between the "out from" and the "bring into" was the wilderness. And right there in the middle, God said, "*I will take you to Myself as a people, and I will be your God*" (Ex. 6:7). Sukkot calls us back to that in-between place, because the wilderness was not wasted time. It was where Israel learned who God was and what it meant to belong to Him. The God who brings us out and the God who will bring us in is also the God who meets us, teaches us, shelters us, and dwells with us **in-between**.

1. IN THE IN-BETWEEN, GOD IS OUR SHELTER

The sukkah is deliberately fragile. It is temporary, vulnerable, and incapable of providing the kind of security that a permanent structure seems to offer. That is part of the lesson. In the wilderness Israel had no fortified cities, stone walls, locked doors, watchmen, or armies surrounding them. They lived in tents. Yet they survived. Why? Because the sukkah was never really their protection. **ADONAI was.** The LORD wanted the generations who came afterward—generations who would live in permanent houses, behind walls, surrounded by fields, possessions, and prosperity—to remember the wilderness. Remember when there was no illusion about what kept you safe. Remember when your shelter was flimsy, the wilderness was dangerous, and you knew that if God did not keep you, you could not keep yourself. The sukkah reminds us that our security has never ultimately been found in the strength of the structure around us. God Himself was and continues to be our shelter.

That is why there can be joy even in an unstable place. God told Abram, "*Do not fear, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward*" (Gen. 15:1). The Promised Land was certainly a gift, but the greater gift was God Himself. The wilderness stripped away Israel's false sources of security so that they could discover the One who had taken them to Himself. And sometimes God still permits the structures around us to shake. Circumstances change. Finances shift. Plans fall apart. Things we thought were permanent suddenly reveal how temporary they really are. Yet Sukkot reminds us that the shaking of the sukkah does not mean that our Shelter has moved. The LORD is still with us.

We can rejoice in the wilderness, not because the wilderness is comfortable, but because **He is our dwelling place there.**

2. IN THE WILDERNESS, GOD'S WORD IS OUR SUSTENANCE

The wilderness also taught Israel where life truly comes from. Moses told them, *"You are to remember all the way that ADONAI your God has led you these 40 years in the wilderness—in order to humble you, to test you, to know what was in your heart... He afflicted you and let you hunger, then He fed you manna—which neither you nor your fathers had known—in order to make you understand that man does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of ADONAI"* (Deut. 8:2–3). The manna was not merely about filling empty stomachs. God was using the wilderness to train His people. Day after day they had to wake up and trust that what God had promised yesterday would still be there today. The physical provision was teaching a greater spiritual reality: God's Word gives life. His Word feeds us, sustains us, strengthens us, and transforms us.

That lesson became especially important when Israel entered the land of abundance. Moses warned them that when they had eaten and were full, built good houses, and watched their possessions multiply, they could begin to say, *"My power and the might of my hand has made me this wealth"* (Deut. 8:17). Prosperity can create the illusion of independence. So every year Israel was told to return to the sukkah and remember. Remember the wilderness. Remember the snakes and scorpions. Remember the thirsty ground. Remember the water that came from a rock. Remember the manna you could not manufacture for yourself. Remember that God *"fed you in the wilderness... to do you good in the end"* (Deut. 8:16). Return to the place where you once complained—and now rejoice there. Look back and recognize that God was sustaining you even when you did not understand what He was doing.

3. IN THE WILDERNESS, GOD DWELLS IN OUR MIDST

Perhaps the most beautiful picture of Sukkot is this: while Israel traveled through the wilderness living in tents, **God Himself also chose to dwell in a Tent among them.** The King of the Universe—the *Adon Olam*, the Master of Eternity—placed the visible manifestation of His glory in the Mishkan, the Tabernacle, right in the center of His people. *"On the day the Tabernacle was erected, the cloud covered the Tabernacle... From evening until morning it was over the Tabernacle like the appearance of fire"* (Num. 9:15). Israel camped around His dwelling. When the cloud moved, they moved. When the cloud remained, they stayed. *"At ADONAI's word they would encamp, and at the mouth of ADONAI they set out"* (Num. 9:23). In a wilderness filled with uncertainty, they could look toward the center of the camp and know: **God is with us.** They lived in tents, and He had pitched His Tent among them.

That living picture reaches its fullness in Yeshua. Isaiah foretold the coming of Immanuel—**God with us**—and John declares, *"The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us. We looked upon His glory, the glory of the one and only from the Father, full of grace and truth"* (John 1:14). The One through whom all things were made humbled Himself to dwell among us. He entered our wilderness. He came into the frailty and temporary nature of human flesh. He came near to deliver us from slavery to sin and to lead us toward the permanent promise of His Kingdom. And in this in-between place, He has not abandoned us. He teaches us, feeds us, sustains us, protects us, heals us, refreshes us, gives rest to the weary, and transforms us. The glory was never in the tent itself. **The glory was that God was in the tent.**

CONCLUSION

The wilderness is not a place to complain. The wilderness—the in-between—is actually a place to REJOICE! Sukkot reminds us that God is bringing us **from** somewhere and He is bringing

us **to** somewhere—but we are living much of our lives in-between. We have been delivered from slavery to sin, yet we have not fully entered the world that is coming. We still experience wilderness. We still live in fragile sukkot. Our bodies are temporary. Our possessions are temporary. Our circumstances are temporary. Even the strongest things in this world eventually reveal their impermanence. But none of that means we are abandoned. In the wilderness, **He is our Shelter. His Word is our Sustenance. His Presence is in our midst.** The God who brought us out is the God who walks beside us, and He is the God who will faithfully bring us all the way into His promise.

So perhaps there is an altar hidden inside the sukkah for each of us. What are you depending upon today to make you feel secure? What provision are you afraid will not be there tomorrow? Where has the wilderness made you wonder whether God is still near? Bring those things before Him. Release your grip on the walls, the resources, and the plans that were never strong enough to be your true security. Turn your sukkah toward Him again. Fix your eyes on His Presence and listen for His Word. The journey does not end in the wilderness. Revelation gives us the destination: *“Behold, the dwelling of God is among men, and He shall tabernacle among them. They shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them and be their God”* (Rev. 21:3). Until that day, rejoice in the wilderness. The King of the Universe has pitched His Tent among us, and **the God who brought us out will bring us home.**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did ADONAI command Israel to remember the wilderness by dwelling in sukkot?
2. What did the manna teach Israel beyond simply trusting God for physical food?
3. Why was God’s presence in the Tabernacle more important than the structure itself?
4. What “permanent” things in your life are you tempted to depend on for security instead of the LORD?
5. Where are you experiencing an “in-between” season right now, and how might God be using it to teach you to trust His presence and His Word?

CLOSING PRAYER

ADONAI, thank You that You are not only the God who brings us out and the God who brings us into Your promise; You are the God who walks with us through the wilderness in-between. Forgive us for the times we have trusted the sukkah more than the One who shelters us. Forgive us for looking to our homes, our finances, our plans, our strength, or our own ability to provide what only You can give. Teach us again that You are our Shelter, You are our very great Reward, and Your Word is the true sustenance of our lives.

Yeshua, thank You for coming into our wilderness and tabernacling among us. Help us to turn our tents toward You, to move when You move, to remain when You tell us to remain, and to trust Your Word one day at a time. Fill these fragile sukkot with Your glory and use even the uncomfortable places of our journey to form us into the people You created us to be. Give us grace to rejoice in the wilderness because You are here, and give us confidence that the One who brought us out will faithfully bring us all the way home.

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.