

Tabernacles Another Jewish holiday

October is full-on Springtime here in Australia and New Zealand, and the beginning of much growing of trees and vegetation. It's also the beginning of the worrisome time of bushfires. Combine that with the anxiety of readying for the Race that Stops the Nation in Melbourne and the Silly Season of Christmas, and you have much about which to consider. But biblically, the main holiday usually celebrated at this time is the 7th of the 7 holidays listed in Leviticus 23. And what it notes and how we remember this is significant.

The Feast of Tabernacles or Shelters (Sukkot)

(Leviticus 23:33–43)

In the Older Testament

Five days after Yom Kippur, on the fifteenth of Tishri, Israel was called to celebrate this final holiday in the biblical calendar. The Hebrew name is Sukkot, meaning tabernacles, booths, or shelters. God decreed that for seven days the people must live in booths in order to remember when they dwelt in temporary structures during the forty years of wandering in the wilderness. They stood as a testimony of the grace of the Lord who sheltered the people throughout those years of wandering. They also stood as a sober reminder of the reason for the wanderings—unbelief. Sukkot also commemorated the final harvest festival of the year. During the week-long commemoration, people gathered foliage (“branches from magnificent trees—palm fronds, boughs from leafy trees, and willows that grow by the streams,” Leviticus 23:40) and rejoiced over the harvest that God had provided. Zechariah 14:16 portrays a requirement that all believers celebrate Sukkot at the end of the age.

In the Newer Testament

Perhaps it was this understanding of Sukkot as a harbinger of the final harvest that provoked Peter's words when he saw Jesus flanked by Moses and Elijah and clothed in his final kingdom glory at the Transfiguration. He exclaimed, “Rabbi, it's wonderful for us to be here! Let's make three shelters . . .” (Mark 9:5). Perhaps, thinking that in this brief vision of glory the Kingdom was about to appear in all its fullness, he was attempting to carry out the mandate of Zechariah 14:16.

In Jewish Life

Jewish people continue to “live in shelters” during this holiday. The shelter or booth is called a sukkah, and is an unsubstantial three-sided edifice decorated with thatching, fruits, and plants. Other elements of the holiday are the lulav (the plants of Leviticus 23:40, thought to be palm branches, myrtle leaves, and willow leaves) and a citron called the etrog.

The book we sell by David Brickner, *Christ in the Feast of Tabernacles*, goes into much of this information and a whole lot more! Please order one for you and one for your pastor to help remember Messiah who ‘dwelt’ (tabernacled) among us (John 1:14). Remember Revelation 21 says, “And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “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.” (.3)

The Messiah, the Tabernacle of God among us, is worth our celebrating with palm branches or with a capella singing, with crashing loud cymbals or with dance and quietude. Don't forget to ring the office to order these books today, or use the coupon or jump on the website to order while supplies last.



Some “problems” turn out to be God’s provision

Some “problems” turn out to be God’s provision. That was the case with the Los Angeles capstone outreach, a three-day Shavuot street fair at our Westwood coffee shop/gallery, just down the street from UCLA.

Team member Kyle reports, “We went back and forth in circles with city officials trying to get parking permits for a food truck as part of the festival. Then at the eleventh hour, it became clear: a movie premiere was about to take place during our festival, and they had booked every single parking spot on our street. This appeared to be an insurmountable problem, but we sent out an urgent prayer request asking for favor with the film’s production coordinator.

“We connected with the coordinator, who was very kind and told us we were welcome to use the parking spots they had reserved since they only needed them during the times that we didn’t!

“It turns out that the metered parking on our street can only be reserved by valets and film production companies—so, without that movie premiere, there was no way we could have reserved the spots! God had coordinated it all in advance, and what seemed like a disaster was divine providence!”

In Los Angeles

Our Los Angeles capstone included the Aleph course, which is our own adaptation of a weekly series where a leader presents a biblical topic, usually to a mixed group of believers, skeptics, and seekers. Attendees then discuss the topic at tables, usually with a light meal or refreshments. Branch leader Isaac Brickner says, “The discussions were great. New people joined us each week, and several returned for more. It was great to see Jacob, who is a cafe regular, at the course. He is Jewish and not a believer in Jesus.

“The highlight of our capstone was the reception for the art show that we planned to coincide with our street fair. The title of the show was ‘in(finite): discovering the paradox of freedom within limitations.’

“About 120 people came to the art reception, most of whom were friends and family of the artists. (We had four Jewish student artists, including one believer in Jesus.) Our Israeli artist brought several of her family members, including her

brother who is a musician and fellow UCLA student. I gave a short talk on the theme of the art show.

“We required people to register for our street activities because we wanted people who were serious about attending, but we let them know that their registration fees would be donated to a group that provides meals for UCLA students who are in need. They appreciated our commitment to the community, and the UCLA paper reported very favorably on the event.

“Please pray with us for the conversations from the Aleph course, the Shavuot street fair, and the gallery to continue.”

Prayer prompts

Please join us in praying for:

salvation for Thomas, Sara, Sara’s parents, Valerie, and Miriam in Budapest

the gospel seeds to bear fruit in the hearts of many of the one thousand homeless people who received our care packages in Tel Aviv

continued opportunities to share the gospel with the unbelieving volunteers who helped our Mekomi team

salvation for the many Jewish people who attended our Sydney capstone event, but especially for Bea, Yosef, and Marina

salvation for the unbelievers who attended our Aleph course in Los Angeles

our LA team’s continued testimony to the students of UCLA, including Jacob, as well as in the general Westwood community

God to continue working in the hearts of those who spoke at, hosted, and attended our Zikaron BaSalon events in France, especially Beth and Shayna

for God to continue to give Joshua and Pascale favor with the Jewish communities in France, especially in the midst of opposition



In Budapest

Kata, our Budapest branch leader reports, “Our main capstone event was the opening of our art show. About 80 people came, including some press and people popping in from another art show.

“We seated people at tables to enjoy a program of music and poetry. We had also produced a magazine featuring testimonies of believers representing various minority groups, including four Jewish testimonies. Beside each testimony, we shared a biblical perspective of how Jesus related to marginalized or persecuted groups of people. Believers featured in the magazine attended the event and had time to share their stories at the tables where they were seated.

“After the program, refreshments were served, and people got to meet the artists. The event was also a competition. A couple of judges selected a winning piece, and another piece was chosen by ‘popular vote’ of the attendees who had filled out ballots.

“Thomas, a Jewish artist we’d never met before, won the popular vote. He is pictured next to his artwork on the cover of this newsletter. Thomas is not a believer and is not especially seeking at this time, but he agreed to meet with one of our team members to take our Jewish Intellectual Survey (JIS), which he has since completed.”

The JIS has been an ongoing project in Budapest. It speaks to the identity of one of our key audiences, as does the magazine, which highlights Jesus’ approach to minorities. The survey includes quantitative questions (e.g., “On a scale of 1–5, how important is Jewish history to you?”) and deeper questions such as how participants have been or continue to be affected by the Holocaust, whether they believe God chose the Jewish people, and what they believe about the promise of Messiah.

The survey has been working really well with our capstone. It provides a reason for continued contact with some who attended the opening, and it gives participants genuine satisfaction in voicing their feelings and views. Sara, a Jewish sociologist who does not believe in Jesus, has agreed to compile and write an article about the results of the JIS. And she came to the art show! It’s been challenging for Kata to secure a sociologist for this project, so she was excited to actually meet Sara in person and solidify the relationship. Sara had brought her mother (who is not Jewish and not a believer but is very involved in the art world.) Through Sara and her mother, Kata has also connected with Sara’s father, who makes documentary films mainly focused on Holocaust survivors. He found the idea of Jews for Jesus intriguing and thought we might make a good subject for one of his documentaries. Pray for this family!

Kata says, “Our team continues to reach out to follow up with those who attended. I have already met with Valerie, who is a new Jewish contact. She read the magazine thoroughly, said it was thought provoking, and has agreed to meet with me to study the Bible.

“Another attender, Miriam, used to meet with me but seemingly lost interest. However, she was willing to take the Jewish Intellectual Survey and attended the opening night of the art show. Clearly, God has been working in her heart during the interval when we were out of contact. She is a Holocaust survivor, and as we reconnected, she confessed to me with tears that she believes in God, she needs Him, and every evening she says a prayer her grandfather taught her. I showed her the suffering Servant passage in Isaiah 53; she has invited me to visit her any time.”

Please continue praying for the work that God is doing among our people in Budapest!

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NEW! 2023–2024 Jubilee 16-Month Calendar

Features beautiful ministry photo collages of key Jewish communities, along with prayer requests for them throughout each month. It's a wonderful way to pray through the year for the Jewish people and for the ministry of Jews for Jesus! Measures 12 and 3/8" W x 9 and 3/8" H CAL24 . **COST: \$30**

Gentle and Lowly

by Dane Ortlund

Christians know what Jesus Christ has done—but who is he? What is his deepest heart for his people, weary and faltering on their journey toward heaven? Jesus said he is “gentle and lowly in heart.” This book reflects on these words, opening up a neglected yet central truth about who he is for sinners and sufferers today. Bob Mendelsohn, leader of JFJ in Australia, said this book changed his mind about the notion of the mediator Yeshua, and radically changed his own life about grace and God the Father’s love for all of us.



COST: \$22

Live in Jerusalem

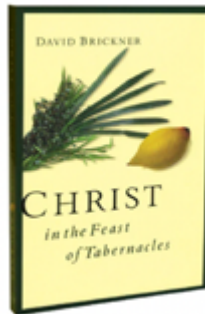
DVD Goetz

Marty Goetz and his adult daughter Misha sing live in Jerusalem, recorded just before the pandemic. Crooner and daughter...great songs. Brilliant orchestration. You will ‘be there’ with them and worship the living God! Don’t delay, get these songs of worship to take you into God’s presence. **COST: \$30**



Christ in the Feast of Tabernacles

Get in touch with the Jewish roots of your Christian faith as you learn the meaning behind Jesus’ claims to be the “Light of the World” and to give us the “living water.” Includes directions on how to build your very own tabernacle (sukkah) as well as traditional recipes to enjoy during the harvest festival. **COST \$25.**



At the Bondi Junction book shop we have all kinds of Jewish holiday gear. Please come to visit and see the lot. Too many to list here. And we would love to see you in person, too! 58 Bronte Road.

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