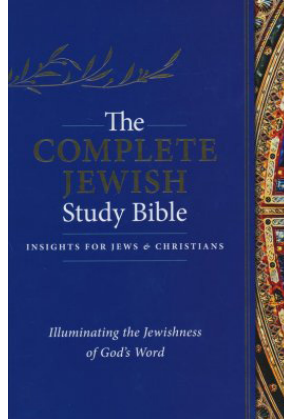


The following eChart is from  
*The Complete Jewish Study Bible*



117

- <sup>1</sup> Praise *ADONAI*, all you nations!  
Worship him, all you peoples!
- <sup>2</sup> For his grace has overcome us,  
and *ADONAI*'s truth continues forever.

*Halleluyah!*

118

- <sup>1</sup> Give thanks to *ADONAI*; for he is good,  
for his grace continues forever.
- <sup>2</sup> Now let Israel say,  
"His grace continues forever."
- <sup>3</sup> Now let the house of Aharon say,  
"His grace continues forever."
- <sup>4</sup> Now let those who fear *ADONAI* say,  
"His grace continues forever."
- <sup>5</sup> From my being hemmed in I called on *Yah*;  
he answered and gave me more room.
- <sup>6</sup> With *ADONAI* on my side, I fear nothing —  
what can human beings do to me?
- <sup>7</sup> With *ADONAI* on my side as my help,  
I will look with triumph at those who hate me.
- <sup>8</sup> It is better to take refuge in *ADONAI*  
than to trust in human beings;
- <sup>9</sup> better to take refuge in *ADONAI*  
than to put one's trust in princes.

**117:2 For his grace has overcome us.** Rashi translates this: "For his kindness has overwhelmed us," and suggests that this is because God has kept his promises to his king and the patriarchs.

**118:1 Give thanks to *ADONAI*; for he is good.** This psalm ends the *Hallel* section (Pss. 113–118), which is recited on sacred occasions throughout the year. There are a number of messianic expressions in these psalms, and most of the significant references are found in this psalm.

- <sup>10</sup> The nations all surrounded me;  
in the name of *ADONAI* I cut them down.
- <sup>11</sup> They surrounded me on every side  
in the name of *ADONAI* I cut them down.
- <sup>12</sup> They surrounded me like bees  
but were extinguished [as quickly] as a fire in thorns;  
in the name of *ADONAI* I cut them down.
- <sup>13</sup> You pushed me hard to make me fall,  
but *ADONAI* helped me.
- <sup>14</sup> *Yah* is my strength and my song,  
and he has become my salvation.



## THE HOLY DAYS OF ISRA'EL

### *Sukkot* (Tabernacles): Traditional Jewish Observance

**Psalm 118** The *Torah* stipulates the fifteenth day of the Jewish month Tishri as the time when the Jewish people are to begin dwelling in a booth (*sukkah* or *sukkot*, plural) and celebrating God's provision. This holy day is so joyful that traditional Jews don't even wait for the fifteenth of Tishri to construct their *sukkot*. Many begin the construction five days early, immediately after the close of *Yom-Kippur*.

The construction of the *sukkah* can be both challenging and fun for the whole family. The Bible gives a rather general commandment to build a *sukkah*. Essentially, it is a temporary hut in which one is to live instead of in one's permanent house. It must have at least three walls, which may be of any material (wood, brick, or tarp). If the booth is constructed next to a house, it may incorporate one or more walls of the house as its own. The most important part of the *sukkah* construction, the roof (called *skhach*) can be anything that grows from the ground, such as branches, wooden two-by-fours, and bushes.

To emphasize its temporary status, the roof is arranged so the stars can be seen through it on a clear night. Once the main construction of the *sukkah* is completed, the children contribute their part with artwork, fruit tied with string, or any other creative ideas they have. The *sukkah* is to be big enough to

house at least one person, but preferably it should be able to hold a table for meals. If the climate is mild enough, then people sleep overnight in the hut.

Once the *sukkah* is built and the holy day has arrived, there are other customs incorporated into the celebration. Each evening of the eight-day festival, special blessings are said over the palm branch (*lulav*) and citron, a fruit from Israel called *etrog*. These two items, along with the myrtle (*hadas*) and willow (*arava*), form what is called "The Four Species." They are wrapped together so the people can wave them in every direction, symbolizing the harvest and God's omnipresence.

Many synagogues build a community *sukkah* to enable all worshippers to experience this greatest symbol of *Sukkot*. Special holy day services are held on the first and eighth days as required by the *Torah*. Because *Sukkot* is a time of joy, there are various processions in which the congregants march around the aisles, waving palm branches, and chanting from Psalm 118, *Ana Adonai Hoshiana!* (Save us Lord!). Thus, with thanksgiving, the Jewish community seeks to remember the theme of this holy day: God dwells with his people.

For more on "The Holy Days of Israel: Sukkot (Tabernacles)," see reading at John 1:14.

- <sup>15</sup> The sound of rejoicing and victory  
is heard in the tents of the righteous:  
“*ADONAI*’s right hand struck powerfully!”
- <sup>16</sup> *ADONAI*’s right hand is raised in triumph!  
*ADONAI*’s right hand struck powerfully!”
- <sup>17</sup> I will not die; no, I will live  
and proclaim the great deeds of *Yah*!
- <sup>18</sup> *Yah* disciplined me severely,  
but did not hand me over to death.
- <sup>19</sup> Open the gates of righteousness for me;  
I will enter them and thank *Yah*.
- <sup>20</sup> This is the gate of *ADONAI*;  
the righteous can enter it.
- <sup>21</sup> I am thanking you because you answered me;  
you became my salvation.
- <sup>22</sup> The very rock that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone!
- <sup>23</sup> This has come from *ADONAI*,  
and in our eyes it is amazing.
- <sup>24</sup> This is the day *ADONAI* has made,  
a day for us to rejoice and be glad.
- <sup>25</sup> Please, *ADONAI*! Save us!  
Please, *ADONAI*! Rescue us!
- <sup>26</sup> Blessed is he who comes in the name of *ADONAI*.  
We bless you from the house of *ADONAI*.
- <sup>27</sup> *ADONAI* is God, and he gives us light.  
Join in the pilgrim festival with branches  
all the way to the horns of the altar.
- <sup>28</sup> You are my God, and I thank you.  
You are my God; I exalt you.
- <sup>29</sup> Give thanks to *ADONAI*; for he is good,  
for his grace continues forever.

**118:22–23 The very rock that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone!** This is a significant passage: v. 22 is quoted in four passages in the *B’rit Hadashah* (Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:4, 7). And there are two additional passages that quote this verse along with v. 23 (Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10–11). The leaders’ (“builders”) rejection of Yeshua the Messiah becomes a proof of his claim to Messiahship.

**118:26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of *ADONAI*.** The shouts of *Baruch haba b’Schem ADONAI* (“Blessed is he who

comes in the name of the Lord”) are recorded in a number of places in the Gospels (see Matt. 23:39; Mark 11:9; John 12:13). These are profound expressions of messianic significance. In fact, it was the way people of that day were taught to welcome the Messiah. Sforzo teaches that in the course of exile, many Jews became estranged from the *Torah* and no longer felt at home in their own heritage. Yet with the coming of the Messiah, all those who strayed are welcomed back and will bless the name of *ADONAI*.

## INTRODUCTION TO *Yochanan* (JOHN)

Christians often refer to the Gospel of John (written most likely between 60 and 90 C.E.) as the Gospel of faith or love, and as the best introduction to the life of Messiah Yeshua because of its profound portrayal of his deity. However, a typical Jewish reader might be troubled by this Gospel's portrayal of the relationship between Yeshua and his Jewish contemporaries. As one Jewish commentator notes, "The Gospel casts the Jews as a group in the role of the Other who resists and opposes the Gospel's message of truth" (Reinhartz 20), and "for this reason, John's Gospel has been called the most Jewish and [also] the most anti-Jewish of the Gospels" (Levine and Brettler 152).

How can a thoroughly Jewish account simultaneously seem anti-Jewish? The key is in Yeshua's harsh words about some of the Jewish authorities who opposed him in first-century Yerushalayim. However, these cannot legitimately be applied to the Jewish people as a whole. Moreover, the argument reflects the language of the Jewish *Nevi'im* (Prophets), and Yeshua debates as a Jew among Jews. Using "we," he identifies with the Jews and insists on the unique place of the Jews in God's purposes. Yeshua's conflict with religious authorities arises from his claim of identity with God, which this Gospel emphasizes more than the others. As the story unfolds, seven times Yeshua uses the Greek phrase *ego eimi*, "I AM," reflecting God's self-description in the Septuagint (Exodus 3:13–15).

The Gospel of John displays deep familiarity with first-century Jewish life and traditions. Speaking as a Jew of the Second Temple period, the author explains Jewish customs (2:6), reflects the use of *midrash* common to first-century Jewish commentators, and weaves Jewish holy days into his narrative. This backdrop frames Yeshua's miracles and teaching.

### OUTLINE

- I. The Son of God Arrives
  - A. A prologue..... 1:1–18
  - B. Early ministry..... 1:19–2:25
- II. The Son of God Ministers
  - A. A Pharisee, a Samaritan woman..... 3:1–4:42
  - B. Healings, teachings, miracles..... 4:43–10:42
  - C. Raising El'azar..... 11:1–57
- III. The Son of God Dies to Save
  - A. The final week..... 12:1–50
  - B. The Last Seder..... 13:1–17:26
  - C. Yeshua's arrest and trial..... 18:1–19:16
  - D. The crucifixion and burial..... 19:17–42
- IV. The Son of God Rises Again
  - A. Yeshua is alive..... 20:1–31
  - B. Yeshua's encounter with the *talmidim*..... 21:1–25



**THE GOOD NEWS OF YESHUA THE MESSIAH,  
AS REPORTED BY**

*Yochanan*

**JOHN**

**1**

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,

and the Word was God.

<sup>2</sup> He was with God in the beginning.

<sup>3</sup> All things came to be through him,  
and without him nothing made had being.

<sup>4</sup> In him was life,  
and the life was the light of mankind.

<sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness has not suppressed it.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God whose name was Yochanan. <sup>7</sup>He came to be a testimony, to bear witness concerning the light; so that through him, everyone might put his trust in God and be faithful to him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not that light; no, he came to bear witness concerning the light.

**1:1a In the beginning was the Word.** This echoes the first sentence of Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The Word is not named as such in Genesis but is immediately seen in action: "And God said, 'Let there be light'" (Gen. 1:3). God expresses himself as commanding, calling, and creating. This expressing, this speaking, this "Word" is God. A God who does not speak, a wordless God, is no God at all. *Word*, from the Greek *logos*, corresponds to the Aramaic *memra*, a technical, theological term used by rabbis in the centuries before and after Yeshua when speaking of God's expression of himself. Thus the Messiah existed before all creation (cf. 17:5).

**1:1b-2 And the Word was with God, and the Word was God.** Some qualities of Yochanan (John) that have been considered non-Jewish or of Hellenistic origin in the past are better understood in a Jewish context. One example is its famous use of the Greek term *logos*: "In the begin-

ning was the Word [*logos*], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." F. F. Bruce notes, "The term *logos* was familiar in some Greek philosophical schools," and "constituted a bridge-word by which people brought up in Greek philosophy...found their way into Johannine Christianity." At the same time, "The true background to John's thought and language is found not in Greek philosophy but in Hebrew revelation" (Bruce, *The Gospel of John* 29). John's use of *logos* is rooted in the creation account of Genesis and parallel Jewish discussions of personified wisdom (Pr. 8:22ff.) and of the Aramaic term *memra* or word. Another example is John's frequent use of stark contrast, as between light and darkness (1:5ff.; 3:19–21; 12:35–36) or above and below (8:23). As with *logos*, this usage has been explained in terms of Greek philosophy, which was dualistic, but it actually reflects streams of Second Temple Jewish thought, in particular, the Dead Sea Scrolls.

<sup>9</sup> This was the true light,  
which gives light to everyone entering the world.

<sup>10</sup> He was in the world — the world came to be through him —  
yet the world did not know him.

<sup>11</sup> He came to his own homeland,  
yet his own people did not receive him.

<sup>12</sup> But to as many as did receive him, to those who put their trust in his person and power,  
he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> not because of bloodline, physical impulse  
or human intention, but because of God.

<sup>14</sup> The Word became a human being and lived with us,  
and we saw his *Sh'khinah*,  
the *Sh'khinah* of the Father's only Son,  
full of grace and truth.

<sup>15</sup> Yochanan witnessed concerning him when he cried out, “This is the man I was talking  
about when I said, “The one coming after me has come to rank ahead of me, because he  
existed before me.”

## THE SH'KHINAH

### John 1:14

The *Sh'khinah* (Divine Presence) is the manifestation of God that descended to “dwell” among humanity. Like *memra* (word or *logos*), the rabbis used the term euphemistically in place of *YHVH*, the Holy Name of “God.” The word itself is taken from passages that speak of God dwelling in the Tabernacle or being among the people of Isra'el (Exod. 25:8; 29:45–46; Num. 35:34; 1 Kings 6:13;

Ezek. 43:9; Zech. 2:1–4). The *Sh'khinah* is brought to its fullness with the incarnation of Yeshua in John 1:14, which states, “The Word became a human being and lived with us, and we saw his *Sh'khinah*, the *Sh'khinah* of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.” This further reinforces the idea that in Messiah, God dwells with people (cf. 2 Cor. 6:16; John 14:23).

**1:11 His own homeland...his own people.** “His own homeland” and “people” could be either the world and humanity or the Land of Isra'el and the Jewish people; the latter seems more relevant since he spent his entire life in or near *Eretz-Isra'el*. Yet Yeshua, the Living Word (v. 10), created the entire world, so the entire world could well be in view here.

**1:12 The right to become children of God.** Here being a “child of God” means having an intimate personal relationship with him, as did Avraham (Abraham), Yitz'chak (Isaac), Ya'akov (Jacob), Moshe (Moses), and David.

**1:14 The Word became a human being.** Literally, “The Word became flesh.” Yeshua, who grew up in Nazareth, did not decide he would be God, but rather the *logos* who “was with God” and “was God,” gave up the “glory [he] had with [the Father] before the world existed” (17:5) and “emptied himself, and took on the form of a slave by becoming like human beings are.” In the incarnation, Yeshua as both *ADONAI* and the Word came to earth as a man. The *Tanakh* reports many instances of God's appearance as a man—to Avraham (Gen. 18), Ya'akov (Gen. 32:25–33), Moshe (Exod. 3), the people of Isra'el (Judg. 2:1–5), and others.

<sup>16</sup> We have all received from his fullness,  
yes, grace upon grace.



## THE HOLY DAYS OF ISRA'EL

### ***Sukkot* (Tabernacles): New Testament Observance**

**John 1:14** John 1:14 relates the special background of Messiah, openly declaring the divine nature of Yeshua. The Word not only was with God in the beginning, but this Word is the very manifestation of God himself (John 1:1). This Word, as Yochanan (John) calls him, was manifested to the world in a practical and tangible way: “The Word became a human being and lived with us, and we saw his *Sh’khinah*, the *Sh’khinah* of the Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Yeshua of Nazareth is more than just a good rabbi or an intriguing philosopher. According to the Bible, he is the visible manifestation of the invisible God of creation! To describe this incarnation, Yochanan employs the Word “dwelt” among his people. As Yochanan sought to describe the Messiah’s first coming to his people, the most obvious picture was *Sukkot*, the holy day that celebrates the dwelling of God!

The Talmud tells of a custom that developed in the Second Temple period. At that time during this holy day, a priest would take a water pitcher down to the Pool of Shiloach (Siloam), dip it in the water, and carry it back to the Temple. Crowds of people would then form a huge procession behind the priest, dancing, singing, and chanting the *Hallel* Psalms (113–118) as they entered the Temple mount. For each of the first six days of *Sukkot*, the procession would circle the Temple altar one time, and on the seventh day there would be seven processions to magnify the joy. The highlight of the ceremony came when the priest dramatically poured the water on the altar of the Temple. The response of the multitudes was so immense that the Talmud says whoever has not been in Yerushalayim for this ceremony has not experienced real joy. Hence, it became known as Rejoicing of the House of Drawing Water (*Hoshana Rabbah*).

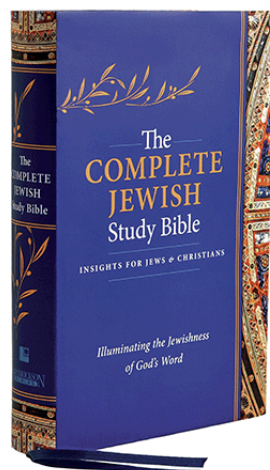
Why all the rejoicing at this water pouring ceremony? Obviously, it had to be more than the rejoicing in the

hope of future winter rains for Isra’el, as important as that might be. Talmudic rabbis speak of deeper truths from Isaiah 12:3 in regard to the ceremony: “Then you will joyfully draw water from the springs of salvation” (salvation in Hebrew is *yeshua*, the name of the Messiah). More than the outpouring of temporal water in Isra’el, the Rejoicing of the House of Drawing Water was to prophetically illustrate the days of messianic redemption when the water of the Holy Spirit would be poured out upon all Isra’el. God will ultimately build his habitation with his people when the kingdom is established under Messiah’s rule. John 7:37–39 explains the next connection to *Sukkot* in the New Testament:

Now on the last day of the festival, *Hoshana Rabbah*, Yeshua stood and cried out, “If anyone is thirsty, let him keep coming to me and drinking! Whoever puts his trust in me, as the Scripture says, rivers of living water will flow from his inmost being.” (Now he said this about the Spirit, whom those who trusted in Him were to receive later—the Spirit had not yet been given, because Yeshua had not yet been glorified.)

Imagine the setting: *Sukkot* was in full swing, and the joy of the first six days was exuberant. On the great final day (*Hoshana Rabbah*), the crowds were filled with expectation for the Messiah and the Holy Spirit he would bring. At the very time of the water-drawing ceremony, Yeshua made a bold proclamation: “Do you truly want the living waters of the Holy Spirit? Does anyone understand the true significance of this ceremony? If anyone desires what the *Bet Ha-sho-evah* symbolizes, let him believe in me. I am the Messiah who will pour out the Holy Spirit on Isra’el!”

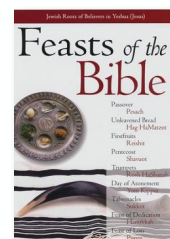
For more on “The Holy Days of Isra’el: Sukkot (Tabernacles),” see reading at Revelation 21:1–3.



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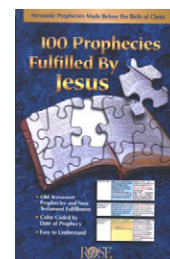
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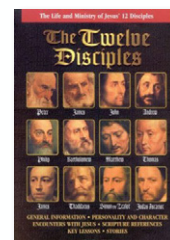
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