

Opening Scripture Reflection:

Over the course of the next three weeks we are going to paint for you, through the Living Scriptures, the End Times, the Return of our Messiah, and the beginning of His Millennial Reign, through the remaining Fall Feasts of the Lord or the Later Appointed Times, when the Lord will Reveal the Redemption of Mankind through His Messiah, Jesus Christ, as we have been learning through Jesus’ Olivet Course, the Book of Daniel, the Book of Ezekiel, the Book of Zechariah, and the Book of Revelation these past eight weeks, during this period of time called “The King is in the Field”, the Womb of Revelation, which included the Messiah’s Birth and futuristic Promised Return, during the period of time when all of Israel’s Kings were counted their Births and Ordained/Commissioned. It was through these Appointed Times/Feasts of the Lord that all futuristic Messianic fulfillments were conceived, birthed, and are being fulfilled, and not the reverse. These next three weeks are the True Foundation of ANY End Times teaching(s).

Opening Scripture Reflection:

Watch: Summary of Jeremiah - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSK36cHbrk0>

Jeremiah 23:16-40

¹⁶ Thus says the Lord of hosts: **“Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes.** They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord. ¹⁷ They say continually to those who despise the word of the Lord, ‘It shall be well with you’; and to everyone who stubbornly follows his own heart, they say, ‘No disaster shall come upon you.’”

¹⁸ **For who among them has stood in the council of the Lord
to see and to hear his word,
or who has paid attention to his word and listened?**

¹⁹ Behold, the storm of the Lord!

Wrath has gone forth,

a whirling tempest;

it will burst upon the head of the wicked.

²⁰ **The anger of the Lord will not turn back
until he has executed and accomplished
the intents of his heart.**

In the latter days you will understand it clearly.

²¹ **“I did not send the prophets,**

yet they ran;

I did not speak to them,

yet they prophesied.

²² **But if they had stood in my council,**

then they would have proclaimed my words to my people,

and they would have turned them from their evil way,

and from the evil of their deeds.

²³ **“Am I a God at hand, declares the Lord, and not a God far away? ²⁴ Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the Lord. ²⁵ I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, ‘I have dreamed, I have dreamed!’”** ²⁶ How long shall there be lies in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart, ²⁷ who think to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, even as their fathers forgot my name for Baal? ²⁸ **Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully.** What has straw in common with wheat? declares the Lord. ²⁹ Is not my word like fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces? ³⁰ **Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, declares the Lord, who steal my words from one another.** ³¹ Behold, I am against the prophets, declares the Lord, who use their tongues and declare, ‘declares the Lord.’ ³² **Behold, I am against those who prophesy lying dreams, declares the Lord, and who tell them and lead my people astray by their lies and their recklessness, when I did not send them or charge them. So they do not profit this people at all, declares the Lord.**

³³ **“When one of this people, or a prophet or a priest asks you, ‘What is the burden of the Lord?’ you shall say to them, ‘You are the burden, and I will cast you off, declares the Lord.’”** ³⁴ **And as for the prophet, priest, or one of the people who says, ‘The burden of the Lord,’ I will punish that man and his household.** ³⁵ **Thus shall you say, every one to his neighbor and every one to his brother, ‘What has the Lord answered?’ or ‘What has the Lord spoken?’”** ³⁶ **But ‘the burden of the Lord’ you shall mention no more, for the burden is every man’s own word, and you pervert the words of the living God, the Lord of hosts, our God.** ³⁷ Thus you shall say to the prophet, ‘What has the Lord answered you?’ or ‘What has the Lord spoken?’ ³⁸ But if you say, ‘The burden of the Lord,’ thus says the Lord, ‘Because you have said these words, “The burden of the Lord,” when I sent to you, saying, “You shall not say, ‘The burden of the Lord,’”” ³⁹ therefore, behold, I will surely lift you up and cast you away from my presence, you and the city that I gave to you and your fathers. ⁴⁰ And I will bring upon you everlasting reproach and perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.”

“Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Messiah will shine on you. Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.”

Ephesians 5:14–16

“Yet they seek me daily

and delight to know my ways,

as if they were a nation that did righteousness

and did not forsake the judgment of their God . . .”

Isaiah 58:2

Again, as a Reminder, earlier this Month Began, “The Days of Favor” known as:

“The King is in the Field”

*These 40 days are a time of meeting with the King of Kings - a time to be happy. Which also corresponds to the prophesied Messianic Virgin Birth (Isaiah 7:14), **Jesus' Birth** (which this year would have fallen on **August 28-29, 2020**), and the prophesied Messianic Return (Zechariah 14:1-4, 9), **Jesus' Return** (which this year will fall on **September 18th through September 20th, 2020**).*

The 1st of Elul, which started this year on **Friday, August 21st at 6pm** started not only “*The King is in the Field*”, also known as the month of the “*Womb*” the month of “*New Beginnings*”, but simultaneously the same period when Moses ascends Mt Sinai for the third 40 day period, to receive the “*Renewed Covenant*” which was broken back during the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), following the sin of the Golden Calf, when God gives His people a Second Chance, completed on the “*Day of Atonement*”, 40 days later, when God Nationally forgives all “*Unknown Sins*”, following the 10 days of Awe (which begins with the Feast of Trumpets, when all Israel King’s births are counted and all Israel Kings are Ordained, when the Messiah, *Jesus*, would be born and will come to Rule as King of kings, for his Millennial Reign), the days of Repentance, prior to the sealing of the Books of Life, Dead, and Repentance, and the Judgment of the “false trinity”, the False Prophet, the False Messiah, and Satan (the Azal); also the declaration and celebration of the “*Year of Jubilee*”, the Wrath of God on the Earth, and the **beginning of Jesus’ Messianic Millennial Reign**.

Week 47 - NITZAVIM (You Are Standing)

**Deuteronomy 29:9 (10)–30:20; Isaiah 61:10–63:9; Romans 10:1–21 / VAYELECH (And He Went)
Deuteronomy 31:1–30; Hosea 14:1 (2)–9 (10); Joel 2:15–27; Micah 7:18–20; Isaiah 55:6–56:8; Romans 10:14–21**

*“You are standing [nitzavim] today in the presence of the Lord your God . . .
You are standing here in order to enter into a covenant with the Lord your God.”
Deuteronomy 29:10–12*

Last week, Parasha Ki Tavo (When You Enter) concluded with Moses telling the people that 40 years after they had attained nationhood, they still had not acquired “a heart to know, eyes to see and ears to hear” all that Adonai had done for them throughout their wilderness journey. **Deuteronomy 29:2–4**

In this week's portion, the Lord confronts the people to choose now His way of life and blessings, or the pagan way of death and curses.

Free to Return to God

Next Friday night, September 18, 2020, begins a ten-day period called Days of Awe (**Yamim Nora'im**) that ushers in Rosh HaShanah (the Jewish calendar New Year) and ends with Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement).

These ten days are meant to be a period of somber introspection during which time we pray for forgiveness of our sins – and ask for forgiveness from those we have sinned against throughout the year.

The repentance required at the time of these upcoming Fall Feasts of the Lord is meant to bring each person back to God.

In Jesus’ day, people came to John the Baptist at the Jordan River during this season of preparation for the Fall Feasts, to be **immersed in the mikvah** (baptized). There, he warned them that they must **produce fruit demonstrating their repentance**.

*“John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, ‘You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?
Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.’”
Luke 3:7–8*

The Hebrew word for repentance, **t’shuvah**, comes from the root **shuv**, meaning **RETURN**.

In other words, when we choose the path of sin, evil and death, it leads us out of the presence of God. And when we repent, we return to the presence of God.

We learn in this Reading, that the result of unrepented sin for the Israelites would be even more than personal separation – it would also be national exile.

But **Blessed be His Name**, exile is not the end of the story.

Free to Choose Good

In Reading “**You are Standing**” (Nitzavim), **God sets before the Jewish People two diametrically opposed choices: life and good, or death and evil.**

Just as a good father might instruct his son or daughter as to the best decision to make, **God implores His children to choose life.**

*“This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses.
Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.”
Deuteronomy 30:19*

This verse provides **an incredible insight into the purpose of the Scriptures (Torah).**

God gave the Scriptures to us as a guide so we know what is good and what is evil; nevertheless, it is up to each of us to either live according to God’s Word by accepting the good and rejecting the evil – or to live according to the dictates of our own heart and the current cultural perspective or worldview.

This is the concept of free will that God has given to mankind.

One ancient Jewish Bible commentator, Rashi, cites a story, or midrash, in the oral tradition (in the treatise Niddah) about the angel responsible for conception who asks God whether the child will grow up to be strong or weak, wise or foolish, rich or poor.

The angel, however, never asks God if the child will become wicked or righteous, since **God may determine the circumstances of one’s life but the decision to choose the good path or the evil one has been left up to man’s own free will.**

Free to Choose Life in Adversity

While it is not possible to control all the circumstances that affect our lives, we can determine how we will react to them.

It might be easier to be happy or be nice when everything is going well, but there is no guarantee that we will be happy or nice even in the midst of good times.

Likewise, tragic circumstances do not have to shake us from our firm foundation so that we lose faith in God and become miserable and bitter.

One Messianic Prophecy Bible team member tells the story of an older woman whose son had passed away from cancer, leaving behind a lovely young wife with three small children.

“They were an observant, Orthodox Jewish family, and I wondered how they would react to such a terrible tragedy,” she said. **“It was then that I overheard the woman speaking to a friend on the phone. Her words were full only of honor toward God, frequently uttering, Blessed be His Name (Baruch Hashem).**”

*It reminded me of how Job was able to say, 'He gives and He takes away. **Blessed be His Name,**' after losing his health, his children and his livelihood." Job 1:21*

A famous psychologist and Holocaust survivor, Viktor Frankl, wrote in his book *Man’s Search for Meaning* about humankind’s ability to exercise free will during the horrific circumstances of the Nazi concentration and death camps.

Although we might expect that a person would be incapable of acting in kind, moral, humane ways under such terrible conditions, Frankl reports in his book that this was not the case; he observed many examples of heroic individuals.

Frankl wrote, “[These men] offer sufficient proof that **everything can be taken away from a man but one thing: the last of human freedoms—to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way . . .**” (pp. 86–88)

Even under extreme physical and emotional stress, we can choose our behavior—whether to love and forgive—or remain in hatred and bitterness.

Most of us will never have to endure such brutal conditions, but each one of us will be presented with choices throughout our lives.

We must choose whether or not to be courageous, unselfish and faithful; or bow to fear, fight for our own way, and lose our human dignity, especially during serious adversity.

Our morality and ethics will be tested at various times throughout our lives. **We cannot plead**, as did some of the Nazis charged with war crimes, who defended themselves saying, *“I had no choice.... I was just following orders.”*

The truth is that we always have the ability to walk in accordance with the values of the Scriptures (Torah) or to walk along that broad path that leads to destruction.

Thus, the mood of repentance becomes more urgent as the month of Elul draws to a close, as we prepare for a special period called **the Ten Days of Awe (Yamin Noraim)**, a time designated for repentance between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

In English, this period is often referred to as **the High Holy Days**. It is a time for deep introspection, reflection, and an honest examination of one’s spiritual state.

In this Reading, Moses asks the people to examine themselves.

He warns them, in a dire prediction, that because of their obstinacy, idolatry and sin, they would be forced to endure a nightmare of tragedies including siege, famine, poverty, war, forced exile, and desolation: **however, Israel would survive as a nation and would RETURN to the Holy Land.**

This prophecy was fulfilled in May 1948 with the re-birth of the state of Israel.

This re-birth of an independent Jewish state stands in contrast to so many great empires which have come and gone.

God has faithfully kept His covenant with Israel.

Deuteronomy 29:14-31:30

Deuteronomy 29:9-13

⁹Therefore keep the words of this covenant and do them, that you may prosper in all that you do.

¹⁰“You are standing today (Nitzavim), all of you, before the Lord your God: the heads of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, all the men of Israel, ¹¹ your little ones, your wives, and the sojourner who is in your camp, from the one who chops your wood to the one who draws your water, ¹² so that you may ENTER INTO THE SWORN COVENANT OF THE LORD YOUR GOD, which the Lord your God is making with you TODAY, ¹³ that he may establish you TODAY as his people, and that he may be your God, as he promised you, and as he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

Why were the Israelites collectively standing before God? It was for one reason alone: **to enter into a covenant with Him.**

The expression you are **standing** (atem nitzavim) is **used almost 300 times in the Bible and always to enter into some kind of contract, pact or agreement.**

All were invited to enter into the **covenant (brit)** with Adonai – from the least to the greatest. Everyone, from the leaders, elders and officers of tribes, to their wives and children had equal opportunity to receive a place in the Kingdom of God.

Even the **stranger or foreigner** (ger) was offered an equal place in the covenant with Elohim, in order *“that He may establish you today as a people for Himself, and that He may be God (Elohim) to you.”*

Deuteronomy 29:13

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Deuteronomy 29:14-15

¹⁴It is not with you alone that I am making this sworn covenant, ¹⁵ BUT with whoever is standing here with us TODAY before the Lord our God, and with whoever is not here with us TODAY.

This covenant was unique in that it transcended any limitation of time or place. It was made with “those standing there as well as with those who were not present at that time.” **Deuteronomy 29:15**

After Israel broke this covenant, God promised through the Hebrew prophet Jeremiah a “New (*Renewed*) Covenant” for the people of Israel and Judah:

“The days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will make a new (renewed) covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke My covenant, though I was a husband to them,’ declares the LORD.”

Jeremiah 31:31–32

Once again, this covenant is extended to everyone – from the least to the greatest (which will be fulfilled during the Millennial Reign of the Messiah):

“No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD.”

Jeremiah 31:34

So, if this New Covenant has been promised to the House of Israel and the house of Judah, how do the Gentile followers of *Jesus* the Messiah enter into God’s Kingdom?

We are told in the book of Ephesians that it is through the blood of *Jesus* that those who were far away have been brought near and granted an equal place in the covenants of promise.

“Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called ‘uncircumcised’ by those who call themselves ‘the circumcision’ (which is done in the body by human hands) – remember that at that time you were separate from Messiah, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Messiah Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Messiah.”

Ephesians 2:11–13

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Deuteronomy 29:16-30:20

¹⁶“You know how we lived in the land of Egypt, and how we came through the midst of the nations through which you passed. ¹⁷ And you have seen their detestable things, their idols of wood and stone, of silver and gold, which were among them. ¹⁸ Beware lest there be among you a man or woman or clan or tribe whose HEART IS TURNING AWAY TODAY from the Lord our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Beware lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit, ¹⁹ (Beware) one who, when he hears the words of this sworn covenant, BLESSES HIMSELF IN HIS HEART, saying, ‘I shall be safe, though I WALK IN THE STUBBORNESS OF MY HEART.’ This will lead to the sweeping away of moist and dry alike. ²⁰ The Lord will not be willing to forgive him, but rather the anger of the Lord and his jealousy will smoke against that man, and the curses written in this book will settle upon him, and the Lord will blot out his name from under heaven. ²¹ And the Lord will single him out from all the tribes of Israel for calamity, in accordance with all the curses of the covenant written in this Book of the Law. ²² And the next generation, your children who rise up after you, and the foreigner who comes from a far land, will say, when they see the afflictions of that land and the sicknesses with which the Lord has made it sick – ²³ the whole land burned out with brimstone and salt, nothing sown and nothing growing, where

no plant can sprout, an overthrow like that of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger and wrath – ²⁴ *all the nations will say, ‘Why has the Lord done thus to this land? What caused the heat of this great anger?’* ²⁵ *Then people will say, ‘It is because they abandoned the covenant of the Lord, the God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt, ²⁶ and went and SERVED OTHER GODS and WORSHIPPED THEM, gods whom they had not known and whom he had not allotted to them.* ²⁷ *Therefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, bringing upon it all the curses written in this book, ²⁸ and the Lord uprooted them from their land in anger and fury and great wrath, and cast them into another land, as they are this day.’*

²⁹ *“The **secret things** belong to the Lord our God, but the **things that are revealed** belong to us and to our children FOREVER, that **we may do all the words of this law.**”*

Return to the Lord – “The Prophesied Ingathering”

Deuteronomy 30:1-3

Repentance and Forgiveness

30 *“And when all these things come upon you, the BLESSINGS and the CURSE, which I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU, and you CALL THEM TO MIND among all the nations where the Lord your God has driven you, ² and RETURN TO THE LORD your God, you and your children, and OBEY HIS VOICE IN ALL THAT I COMMAND you TODAY, with all your heart and with all your soul, ³ then the Lord your God WILL RESTORE your fortunes and have mercy on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you.*”

In this Reading, God tells the Israelites that those who will be scattered into exile due to sin, would be gathered back to the Promised Land when they returned to Him. And after He gathers and returns them to their own land, He would bless and prosper His people Israel.

“When you and your children return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where He scattered you.”

Deuteronomy 30:2-3

G-d will return: G-d will return your captivity... (30:3)

The Hebrew word used here for "he will return" is not *veheishiv* - - which means "he will bring back" -- but *veshav*, which literally means "he will come back." Our sages learned from this that the Divine presence resides among Israel, as it were, in all the misery of their exile, and when the Jews are redeemed, G-d speaks of it as His own redemption -- He Himself returns along with Israel's exiles.

<https://w2.chabad.org/media/pdf/56/kZJi561539.pdf>

Deuteronomy 30:4-6

⁴ *if YOUR OUTCASTS are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from THERE THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL GATHER YOU, and from THERE HE WILL TAKE YOU. ⁵ And THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL BRING YOU INTO THE LAND that your fathers possessed, THAT YOU MAY POSSESS IT. And he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. ⁶ And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.*”

circumcise: And G-d shall circumcise your heart... (30:6)

From the time of the creation of the universe, man had the choice to be righteous or wicked. So it was for the entire duration of the Torah, in order that there be merit for us in choosing good and punishment for desiring evil. But in the days of Moshiach, the choosing good will be in our nature, and the heart will not lust for that which is not proper for it and have no desire for it at all. This is the "circumcision" spoken of here, as lust is a "foreskin" blocking the heart, and the "circumcision of the heart" is the removal of lust. In those times man will return to what he was before Adam's sin, when he naturally did what is proper to do and there were no conflicts and contradictions in his will...

<https://w2.chabad.org/media/pdf/56/kZJi561539.pdf>

For in the days of Moshiach there will be no desire [of evil], and thus no merit or guilt -- since merit and guilt are both the product of a free will.

Nachmanides

Deuteronomy 30:7-10

⁷ *And the Lord your God will put all these curses on your foes and enemies who persecuted you. ⁸ And you SHALL AGAIN OBEY THE VOICE OF THE LORD AND KEEP ALL HIS COMMANDMENTS that I command you TODAY. ⁹ The Lord your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your womb and in the fruit of your cattle and in the fruit of your ground. For the Lord WILL AGAIN TAKE DELIGHT IN PROSPERING YOU, as he took delight in your fathers, ¹⁰ when you OBEY THE VOICE OF THE LORD YOUR GOD, to KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS and HIS STATUTES that are WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK OF THE LAW, when you TURN (RETURN) TO THE LORD your God with ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL.*”

free choice: Life an death I set before you, the blessing and the course. An you shall choose life (30:10)

Freedom of choice has been granted to every man: if he desires to turn toward a good path and be righteous, the ability to do so is in his hands; and if he desires to turn toward an evil path and be wicked, the ability to do so is in his hands...

This concept is a fundamental principle and a pillar of the Torah and its commandments. As it is written [Deuteronomy 30:15]: "See, I have set before you life [and good, and death and evil]" and "See, I set before you today [a blessing and a curse]"... For were G-d to decree that a person be righteous or wicked, of if there were to exist something in the very essence of a person's nature which would compel him toward a specific path, a specific

conviction, a specific character trait or a specific deed...how could G-d command us through the prophets "do this" and "do not do this,"...? What place would the entire Torah have? And by what measure of justice would G-d punish the wicked and reward the righteous...?

(Mishneh Torah, Laws of Repentance 5:1-3)

Deuteronomy 30:11-14

The Choice of Life and Death

11 “For this commandment that I command you today is NOT TOO HARD FOR YOU, neither is it far off. **12** It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ **13** Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ **14** **But THE WORD IS VERY NEAR YOU. IT IS IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART, SO THAT YOU CAN DO IT.**

Still, today many believe that it is just too hard to obey God or keep the Torah.

This Reading reminds us that God promises that **it is NOT too difficult for us to walk in obedience:**

“Now **what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you** or beyond your reach . . .

The word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it.”

Deuteronomy 30:11–14

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

15 “See, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU TODAY LIFE AND GOOD, DEATH AND EVIL. 16 If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you TODAY, by loving the Lord your God, by WALKING IN HIS WAYS, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it.

love: To love the L-rd your G-d... for He is your life (30:20)

How is it fitting to love G-d?

A person should love G-d with such great and powerful intensity that his soul is bound in this love and is constantly pursuing it as one, for example, who is smitten with lovesickness -- as one who is so obsessed with a carnal love that his mind is never free of desire for that woman... Even more so is the love of G-d in the hearts of those who love him...

This is what King Solomon meant when he said by way of metaphor, "For I am sick with love." Indeed, the entire Song of Songs is a metaphor for this concept...

(Mishneh Torah, Laws of Repentance 10:3)

Moreover, there are many rewards for being obedient.

These rewards are not relegated to **the world to come (olam habah)** but are also for our lives here and now.

They are not only spiritual rewards for when we get to Heaven; they are also physical, material, and emotional rewards such as long life, prosperity, and success for today.

Yet, evil persists, and we know that even the obedient ones fall prey at times to the oppression and attacks of the enemy and to a world that is fallen.

Jesus even said that “in this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

John 16:33

Disillusioned (Lesson 55)

Near the end of the Last Supper Jesus began talking to His disciples about various relationships they would be involved in. First he talked about their relationship with Him. “Abide in Me, and I in you.” Then He discussed their relationship with one another. “This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.” And finally He talked to them about their relationship with the world. “If the world (kosmos) hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world (kosmos), the world (kosmos) would love its own; but because you are not of the world (kosmos), but I chose you out of the world (kosmos), because of this the world (kosmos) hates you,” **John 15:18-22.**

When Jesus used the term “world”, He wasn’t talking about the earth with its landmasses, oceans, lakes, rivers, mountains and prairies. Instead the Scriptures use the Greek word kosmos (world). The word kosmos is translated as “adornment”. It’s the way things appear or the way things operate here on earth. It’s an illusion! And that is the same way the world (kosmos) is . . . it’s an illusion. The things of this world look attractive however they are not as they appear. The Scriptures tell us that Satan, the father of lies (**John 8:44**), governs all the kingdoms of this world (kosmos). Therefore, everything in it is wearing a deceptive mask . . . it’s an illusion. In fact you could substitute the word illusion for the word, world (kosmos). For example we could read a familiar verse from the book of James as, “*You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world (illusion) is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world (illusion) makes himself an enemy of God,*” (**James 4:4**).

According to the dictionary an illusion is a false idea or conception. It is belief or opinion not in accord with the facts . . . an unreal, deceptive, or misleading appearance or image. Many people use the word disillusioned in a negative sense, however to be disillusioned is actually quite good. The word disillusioned simply means to be free from illusion or false ideas.

Jesus begins the lesson by telling the disciples that they will be hated by the world. This is quite understandable because the world and its systems are based on lies, while Jesus, His disciples and the Kingdom of God are all based on the truth. Therefore conflict is inevitable.

Jesus continued by saying, “If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.” Jesus is so adamant about this truth that He reinforces it with a command, “Remember the word I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than His master’. **If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you,**” John 15:18-22.

Yet at the same time we are not to fight against flesh and blood even though our enemies may control people through **lies and illusions**. It is these people who persecute us not knowing the truth. **And like Jesus they may ridicule, torture or kill us. But we are to be of good cheer knowing full well that our hope is not in this world.** As Jesus brought the lesson to a close He said, “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world (kosmos) you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world (kosmos)” (John 16:33).

The point of the lesson is to welcome disillusionments by welcoming truth. Rejoice when you are persecuted for truth because it affirms your transformation into the image of Christ.

With that, allow me to leave you with these questions to consider:

1. Name some illusions that people live under?
2. How do people become disillusioned? *By learning the truth. “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free,” (John 8:31-32).*
3. Many Christians believe that everything in their life will be wonderful. What is the truth about this? *They forget the Scripture that says in this world you will have tribulation.*
4. Many Christians believe that everyone in church is nice, understanding and forgiving. What is the truth about this? *Not everyone in a church is a Christian, in fact they may be sent by your enemy to destroy the work. Also Christians are a being conformed to the image of Christ and may not have arrived at maturity.*
5. Many Christians believe that when they get married, their lives will be totally fulfilling. What is the truth about this? *It takes hard work, dying to one’s self and submission to their mate.*
6. Many Christians believe that you should trust one another. What is the truth about this? *Where is it written that we should trust in any man? According to the Scriptures we should trust only in God (Ps 20:7, Ps 56:4, Pr 3:5, Jeremiah 17:5-8, and Jn 14:1).*
7. Many Christians believe that spiritual growth just happens. What is the truth about this? *Spiritual growth is a process in which the believer is conformed to the image of Christ by hearing the Word of God and obeying it. At various points in his life he will undergo testing.*
8. Many Christians believe that the government can solve their problems. What is the truth about this?

Deuteronomy 30:17-20

¹⁷ But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸ I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. ¹⁹ I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore **CHOOSE LIFE, that you and your offspring may live. ²⁰ **loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days,** that you may dwell in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”**

Those who have troubles do not have to succumb to fear.

While Frankl reminds us that we can find meaning even in the midst of suffering, **Scripture tells us that the enemy cannot take away from us many good things: our freedom to choose good**; our faith in the God of Israel; and our faith in *Jesus* as our Messiah, who sacrificed His own life to release us from spiritual bondage so we can be truly experience freedom in this life.

No matter how bleak things look at any given moment, God will show us evidence of His goodness and mercy while we are yet on this earth.

As King David said, “I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.”

Psalm 27:13

Choosing life entails loving God with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength, listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit and keeping His commandments. Doing so is the very best choice we could ever make – for this is our very life!

“Now CHOOSE LIFE, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to His voice, and hold fast to Him. For THE LORD IS YOUR LIFE, and He will give you many years in the land He swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

Deuteronomy 30:20

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The Haftarah (Prophetic Portion)

“Comfort, comfort My people, says your God.”

Isaiah 40:1

For the past seven weeks since Tisha B’av – the remembrance of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Holy Temples – all the prophetic messages in the *Reading of the Prophets* (Haftarah) have **focused on comfort and consolation**.

The Hebrew prophet, **Isaiah**, comforts the exiles of Israel with the assurance that God has forgiven their sins and, in His mercy, will bring them back to their Land. **The Prophetic Reading “You Are Standing” (Nitzavim) is the climax of these seven messages of comfort.**

The prophetic portion of Scripture studied **this Shabbat** passes over the first portion of **Isaiah 61**, which is **an important Messianic prophecy**. Whether or not this is a deliberate omission to keep the knowledge of *Jesus* (Yeshua) from the common people is debatable.

However, it is important that we read and study the entire Bible and not rely only upon the traditional *Prophetic* portions that may leave out **these crucial Messianic prophecies.**

This omitted prophecy of Isaiah 61 is the passage that *Jesus* (Yeshua) read in the synagogue on the Sabbath (Shabbat) to proclaim Himself Messiah, as well as proclaim “*The Year of the LORD’s Favor.*” **Luke 4:16–19 – Which is also Read during the Feast of Atonement**

“... *The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners to*
proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor.”

Isaiah 61:1–2

The rest of the verse, which *Jesus* (Yeshua) apparently did not read, is for future fulfillment: “... ***and the day of vengeance of our God***” looks forward to the day of *Jesus’* (Yeshua’s) **RETURN, when He will take vengeance on the enemies of Israel.**

In this *Prophetic* portion, God appears dressed as a warrior in that day of vengeance; His clothes stained in the blood of Israel’s enemies.

“*Who is this coming from Edom [descendants of Esau—terrorist faction of radical Islam], from Bozrah, with His garments stained crimson? Who is this, robed in splendor, striding forward in the greatness of His strength?*
‘It is I, proclaiming victory, mighty to save.’”

Isaiah 63:1

Israel stands as a sign and beacon to all peoples everywhere of the wonderful grace and mercy of God.

Its glorious restoration reveals that God can REPLANT, REBUILD, RE-ESABLISH His people from the worst destruction in each one of our lives. If we will give Him our ashes and mourning, He will give us beauty and the oil of joy.

“*The Lord has anointed Me to ... provide for those who grieve in Zion – to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.*”

Isaiah 61:1, 3

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New Beginnings in the *Prophetic* (Haftarah) Reading

This week’s *prophetic portion* provides three powerful images of new beginnings:

Isaiah 61:10-63:9

Isaiah 61:10

¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in the Lord;
my soul shall exult in my God,
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation;
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

1. New Clothes:

“*For God has clothed me in garments of triumph, wrapped me in a robe of victory, like a bridegroom adorned with a turban, like a bride bedecked in her finery.*”

Isaiah 61:10

God is going to give us a whole new look, and whether we are male or female, we’re going to look gorgeous!

He will be giving us a new beautiful wardrobe, fixing up our hair, placing the necklace of precious jewels around our neck, fussing with our appearance to make us look our best, a perfect Bride without spot or wrinkle.

This is the ultimate makeover.

God’s Bride, Israel and the foreigners who all abide in *Jesus the Messiah*, is being prepared to meet her Beloved. Instead of defeat and despair, we are going to be clothed in triumph and victory!

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Isaiah 61:11-62:4

¹¹ For as the earth brings forth its sprouts,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
to sprout up before all the nations.

Zion’s Coming Salvation

**62 For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not be quiet,
until her righteousness goes forth as brightness,**

and her salvation as a burning torch.
² **The nations shall see your righteousness,
and all the kings your glory,
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the Lord will give.**
³ You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.
⁴ **You shall no more be termed Forsaken,
and your land shall no more be termed Desolate,
but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her,
and your land Married;
for the Lord delights in you,
and your land shall be married.**

2. A New Name (Identity):

In the Bible, a name change is a sign of a major life change or transformation.

God changed Abram and Sarai's names to Abraham and Sarah by adding the Hebrew letter **hey** (ה). This Hebrew letter occurs in two out of the four letters of God's name YHVH. With a part of God's identity meshed into their own, they were able to be fertile and fulfill their God-given destiny.

Jacob's name was also changed from **Yaacov** (which can mean heel, but also deceiver) into **Yisrael** – triumphant with God (*one who wrestles with God and man and prevails*). Or it may be derived from the verb **yashar**, meaning straight / honest with God.

Likewise, the Bible promises that God will give Israel a new name.

*“You will be called by a new name... No longer will you be called **Forsaken**, neither shall your land any more be called **Desolate**; but you shall be called, **‘My delight is in her and your land, Married; for the Lord delights in you and your land shall be married.’**”*
Isaiah 62:2, 4

In Revelation 2, a chapter emphasizing repentance, God once again promises a new name:

*“To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with **a new name** written on it, known only to the one who receives it.”*
Revelation 2:17

God wants to change our name so we can know our true identity in the Messiah: righteous, holy, redeemed, forgiven, free, friend of God.

Once we truly know who we are in Him, we will begin to act differently, like true children of God. Others will see us and relate to us differently, and our whole lives will be transformed.

“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.”
Proverbs 23:7

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Isaiah 62:3-5

³ You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God . . .
⁴ . . . and **your land shall be married.**⁵ For as a young man marries a young woman,
so shall your sons marry you,
**and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,
so shall your God rejoice over you.**

3. New Love and Intimacy

The third image is that of **new love and intimacy**.

The Hebrew root word **Baal**, which occurs several times in Isaiah 62:4–5, means **marry**. God loves Israel and He loves us as a bridegroom loves His bride. (*not married yet, until the “Last Day” which is a 1,000 year period, and at which we do not celebrate the Wedding Feast of the Lamb until the conclusion of that “Last Day”, 1,000 years after its beginning, while up to that period, God's people are “Engaged” to God, which is treated and observed on the same terms as a “Marriage” or as a “Married Couple”*)

We are the beautiful Bride of the Messiah, a “crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord—a royal **diadem** [precious gem]” – and He rejoices over us: “As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.” **Isaiah 62:3, 5**

God is so intimate with us that He Himself dresses us with new garments, like a mother with a little child; He names us with a new name, as the parent of a new baby; and **He rejoices over us, as a bridegroom who loves His bride.**

On our journey of transformation, as we at times go through the fires and floods of affliction, we can find comfort in the knowledge that God is with us and He cares for us. He will never leave us nor forsake us. He is so intimately involved with us that in all of our affliction, He is afflicted.

Perhaps this is one of the reasons that Isaiah states that Messiah is a “man of sorrows and well acquainted with grief.” (*Isaiah 53:3*)

One of the names of God is **YHVH Shamah**, which means *God is There*. Sometimes that’s all we need – to know that He is “there for us.” *He is God with us – Emanu-EL*.

Yes, God wants to restore, rebuild, renew, and even avenge, but **as we reflect on this past year**, if we see pain and anguish, **let us remember that God can do much more than just meet our needs**: He is the parent who dresses and provides for us, the counselor who guides us into all we can be, and the lover who adores us.

This may not take away the hurt. God doesn’t always instantly fix every broken thing in our lives, but He is always there for us to provide, comfort, and encourage.

Perhaps this is all we need to find the courage to begin again – to walk into the new thing that God has prepared for His Beloved.

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Isaiah 62:6-63:9

⁶ On your walls, O Jerusalem,
I have set watchmen;
all the day and all the night
they shall never be silent.

You who put the Lord in remembrance, take no rest,

Remembrance - *call upon* Isaiah 62:6
burn incense, make mention of, be mindful, recount.

A primitive root; properly, to mark (so as to be recognized), i.e. To remember; by implication, to mention; also be mindful, recount, record(-er), remember, make to be remembered, bring (call, come, keep, put) to (in) remembrance, still, think on, well.

Isaiah 62:7-63:9

⁷ and give him no rest
until he establishes Jerusalem
and makes it a praise in the earth.

⁸ The Lord has sworn by his right hand
and by his mighty arm:

“I will not again give your grain
to be food for your enemies,
and foreigners shall not drink your wine
for which you have labored;

⁹ but those who garner it shall eat it
and praise the Lord,
and those who gather it shall drink it
in the courts of my sanctuary.”

¹⁰ Go through, go through the gates;
prepare the way for the people;
build up, build up the highway;
clear it of stones;
lift up a signal over the peoples.

¹¹ Behold, the Lord has proclaimed
to the end of the earth:

Say to the daughter of Zion,
“Behold, your salvation comes;
behold, his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.”

¹² And they shall be called The Holy People,
The Redeemed of the Lord;
and you shall be called Sought Out,
A City Not Forsaken.

The Lord’s Day of Vengeance

63 Who is this who comes from Edom,
in crimsoned garments from Bozrah,
he who is splendid in his apparel,
marching in the greatness of his strength?

“It is I, speaking in righteousness,
mighty to save.”

² Why is your apparel red,
and your garments like his who treads in the winepress?

³“I have trodden the winepress alone,
and from the peoples no one was with me;
I trod them in my anger
and trampled them in my wrath;
their lifeblood spattered on my garments,
and stained all my apparel.
⁴**For the day of VENGEANCE was in my heart,
and my YEAR OF REDEMPTION year of redemption had come.**
⁵I looked, but there was no one to help;
I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold;
so my own arm brought me salvation,
and my wrath upheld me.
⁶I trampled down the peoples in my anger;
I made them drunk in my wrath,
and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth.”
The Lord’s Mercy Remembered
⁷I will recount the steadfast love of the Lord,
the praises of the Lord,
according to all that the Lord has granted us,
and the great goodness to the house of Israel
that he has granted them according to his compassion,
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.
⁸For he said, “Surely they are my people,
children who will not deal falsely.”
And he became their Savior.
⁹**In all their affliction he was afflicted,**
and the angel of his presence saved them;
in his love and in his pity he redeemed them;
he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

Romans 10

10 Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. ²For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. ³**For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness.** ⁴For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

The Message of Salvation to All

⁵For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that **the person who does the commandments shall live by them.** ⁶But the righteousness based on faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) ⁷“or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ⁸But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); ⁹because, **if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.** ¹⁰For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. ¹¹For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” ¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. ¹³For **“everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”**

¹⁴How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” ¹⁶But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” ¹⁷**So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.**

¹⁸**But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for
“Their voice has gone out to all the earth,
and their words to the ends of the world.”**

¹⁹But I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says,
“I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation;
with a foolish nation I will make you angry.”

²⁰Then Isaiah is so bold as to say,
“I have been found by those who did not seek me;
I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me.”

²¹But of Israel he says, “All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people.”

Next Week’s Reading:

Week 48 - VAYELECH (And He Went)
Deuteronomy 31:1–30; Hosea 14:1 (2)–9 (10); Joel 2:15–27; Micah 7:18–20; Isaiah 55:6–56:8; Romans 10:14–21