

Shabbat Shuvah

There is a Sabbath that falls between the blast of the shofar and the affliction of Yom Kippur. It has no fixed date, landing wherever the seventh day falls between the first and tenth of Tishrei. But wherever it lands, it carries a name that should give every Bible-reading believer pause: Shabbat Shuvah—the Sabbath of Return.

The name "Shabbat Shuvah" comes from the Hebrew word "shuv," meaning "to return," which is a central theme of this observance. It is often associated with the concept of teshuvah, or repentance, which is crucial during the High Holidays. It is taken from:

Hosea 14:2. Return **(Shuvah: to return, repent, turn back to God)** Isra'el, to ADONAI your God, for your guilt has made you stumble.

Shuv the root of T'shuva, to turn away from evil and turn back to God, to refresh, restore, and repair, to be brought back. We are in the 10 days of Awe-Yamim Noraim-Awesome days or days of awe. These are days of anxiety, trepidation, humility, and soul searching and repentance. An intense period of self-examination where we become aware of how we have failed ourselves, failed other people, and failed God! It is a time of regret and remorse for the harm we have inflicted on others and within the Kingdom of God! It is not a time of selfishness and concern for self, rather is it a crying out to God, it's the awakening of your soul, a stirring in oneself for the greater Kingdom of God!

For the believer who reads the Bible as a whole, Shabbat Shuvah is not merely a call to personal repentance. It is a rehearsal of the greatest regathering in human history—the return of the exiles of Israel and Judah to their God and to their land. And it stands at the head of a season that culminates in Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles, the feast that commemorates the first aliyah—the Exodus from Egypt—and points forward to the final aliyah, when the exiles will be gathered from the four corners of the earth.

This is the preparation period for Yom Kippur (Next Sunday, September 20th at sunset), the Day of Purging! We approach these days slightly different as Messianic Believers. We have an atonement sacrifice, Yeshua gave His own blood to wash away our sins

II Corinthians 5:21. God made this sinless man be a sin offering on our behalf, so that in union with him we might fully share in God's righteousness."

Yeshua took on the burden of our sins despite being sinless himself. Through this act, he bore the weight of our transgressions, offering us salvation and reconciliation with God. This is immensely relevant today as it addresses the fundamental human need for reconciliation with God. This message offers hope

and freedom in a world where people often feel the weight of guilt and the burden of sin. It reassures us that our standing before God is not based on our imperfect efforts but on Yeshua's perfect sacrifice.

Receiving Yeshua does not remove the necessity for T'Shuvah, repentance. The Sefer HaChaim, the Books of Life are open now, the divine court of heaven is in session.

II Corinthians 5:10. for we must all appear **(phaneroo {fan-er-o'-o} to make manifest, visible or known what has been hidden or unknown, to manifest, whether by words, or deeds, to thoroughly know who and what one is)** before the Messiah's court of judgment, where everyone will receive the good or bad consequences of what he did while he was in the body.

We all have a court date, we will all appear before Messiahs court of judgment! This is a fundamental Kingdom truth: every individual will one day stand before the judgment seat of Messiah. No one is exempt! This is a sobering reminder that each of us will be held accountable for our actions and choices in this life. It prompts us to reflect on our deeds, thoughts, motives, and intentions, knowing that we will ultimately be judged based on these aspects of our life. It mandates us to live with purpose, integrity, and a deep reverence for God, knowing that our deeds will echo into eternity. Let us heed this call to examine our hearts, align our lives with God's kingdom truth, and eagerly anticipate the day when we will stand before the judgment seat of Messiah. On Yom Teruah were rehearsing Yeshua's return then He judges during the Ten Days of Awe. It's all about the voluntary removal of sin, if not there are consequences:

Psalms 106:39-40. Thus they were defiled by their deeds; they prostituted themselves by their actions, ⁴⁰ For this ADONAI's fury blazed up against his people, and he detested his heritage.

What was so horrendous, so vile, so abhorrent that God would detest His own children, his first born, His sons and daughters? What was so painful that the creator of the universe could not stand to look upon His own creation, His chosen people? Sin! Sin that led Israel into the same worldly lifestyle as those who lived around them. This is a poignant reminder of the consequences of straying from Adonai's path and the importance of faithfulness in our relationship with Him. In a world filled with distractions and temptations, the call to self-reflection on our actions and the necessity of repentance and seeking God's guidance is ever pertinent. Just as God remained faithful to Israel despite their shortcomings, He stands ready to forgive and deliver us when we humbly return to Him.

Zechariah 1:4. "Don't be like your ancestors. The earlier prophets proclaimed to them, 'ADONAI-Tzva'ot says to turn back now from your evil ways and deeds'; but they didn't listen or pay attention to me," says ADONAI.

Israel had caved into peer pressure and geopolitical influence, they were living and acting just like everyone else around them! They had apostatized and become just like the rest of the world. As we gather here for Shabbat T'shuva, in the Days of Awe, Yamim noraim, we pursue great humility, soul searching, and repentance ourselves. A period of self-examination where we deal with how we have failed ourselves, failed other people, and failed God! It is a time of regret and remorse for the harm we have inflicted on others and within the Kingdom of God! It seems as if we've been doing a lot of this, yet it's a daily process, not just Elul or the Ten Days of Awe!

It is not a time of concern for self, rather is it a crying out to God and the awakening of the soul, a stirring in oneself for the greater Kingdom of God! This is the preparation for Yom Kippur, the Day of Purge.

While it is true that the Throne Room is accessible to us every day of the year, the Gates are still there, the enemy roams about the road to the palace waiting to strike the unwary. Every day "Life" and all of its trappings continue to place obstacles before us on our Journey into the throne room. During the Days of Awe, the "King" is in the field, He is here, present where we are, beckoning to us, calling out to us, calling us back to Him!

Isaiah 55:6-7. Seek ADONAI while he is available, call on him while he is still nearby. ⁷ Let the wicked person abandon his way and the evil person his thoughts; let him return to ADONAI, and he will have mercy on him; let him return to our God, for he will freely forgive.

This emphasizes the importance of turning to Adonai and recognizing the vast difference between human understanding and divine wisdom. "Seek ADONAI while he is available, call on him while he is still nearby." urges immediate action on our part, implying urgency and the importance of not delaying our pursuit of Him. In our fast-paced world, it's easy to put off spiritual matters, this reminds us that the time to seek Adonai is now, not later. This requires us to surrender our own preconceived notions and instead seek His guidance through prayer, meditation on His Word, and a desire to walk in obedience to His will. We can begin to grasp His ways and thoughts in a deeper and more profound way by seeking Adonai diligently, with a genuine desire to be more intimate with Him and know Him more. There are so many afflictions that prey upon believers that in reality are not attacks of the enemy but are the result of our own disobedience. As Yeshua said in:

Luke 6:46. "Why do you call me, `Lord! Lord!' but not do what I say?"

Yeshua is probing them to evaluate the authenticity of their commitment by asking why they call him "Lord, Lord" but do not follow what He says. Essentially, he is pointing out the inconsistency between their profession of faith and their actual behavior. This reveals the importance of not just proclaiming one's faith outwardly but also living it out through our actions. Consider our own lives. Do we merely pay lip service to our beliefs without letting them guide our choices and actions? Are we sincere in our devotion to God, or do we only seek to please Him superficially? Yeshua's question challenges us to examine our hearts and align our words with our deeds. True faith entails not just acknowledging Yeshua as Lord but also obeying his commandments and striving to live according to his teachings. This rings true to every believer in this room and every believer within the greater body! There is a tendency to come every week and have a Holy encounter yet go right back to business as usual the other 6 days of the week. Why? Because we don't (for a myriad of reasons and excuses) do what He commands us to do. Yeshua further warns us in:

Matthew 7:21-23. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, only those who do what my Father in heaven wants. ²² On that Day, many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord! Didn't we prophesy in your name? Didn't we expel demons in your name? Didn't we perform many miracles in your name?' ²³ Then I will tell them to their faces, 'I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness!'

This is part of Yeshua's "Sermon on the Mount" in the Galle. It is crucial for us to constantly evaluate our actions, agenda's, and motivations to ensure that they are in alignment with Adonai's teachings and Mitzvah's. We must seek to live out our faith in a way that honors Adonai and serves His purposes, rather than simply seeking our own recognition or rewards. We can be confident that our actions align with His will and bring glory to His name by submitting our will to Adonai's and seeking His guidance in everything that we do. We ultimately are called to be obedient to God's will and to surrender our own desires and plans to His divine purpose. We can trust that our actions, when aligned with His will, will bear fruit and bring about His kingdom on earth as we strive to live in a manner that reflects God's love and truth.

While it is true that the Throne Room is always accessible to each individual every day of the year, there are Gates and obstructions present, the enemy roams about waiting to strike the unwary. That is to say that "Life" and all of its trappings continue to place obstacles before us on our Journey into the throne room. During the Days of Awe, the "King" is in the field, He is here, present where we are, beckoning to us, calling out to us! The urgency of the moment overtakes us, we must reach for Him while He is here, when He is close! As we search ourselves this evening I believe there are 7 points to remember as we move forward into Yom Kippur:

1. We are Citizens of Heaven:

Philippians 3:20. But we are citizens of heaven, and it is from there that we expect a Deliverer, the Lord Yeshua the Messiah.

Citizen is politeuma {pol-it'-yoo-mah}, some translations use conversion here but it's contextually wrong. Politeuma {pol-it'-yoo-mah}, means your state or commonwealth, your form of government, your citizenship is in heaven. Not of this world which then means:

2. We are Aliens and Strangers in this world:

I Peter 2:11-12. Dear friends, I urge you as aliens and temporary residents not to give in to the desires of your old nature, which keep warring against you; ¹² but to live such good lives among the pagans that even though they now speak against you as evildoers, they will, as a result of seeing your good actions, give glory to God on the Day of his coming.

Warring is strateuomai {strat-yoo'-om-ahee} in the Greek, literally a military term, to lead soldiers to war or battle, to fight. We are literally at war with our old nature and desires, it's a battle, a fight, those old desires and nature wage campaigns and war against us. We are urged not to give in, don't surrender! Fight!

3. Do not conform to this World:

Romans 12:2. In other words, do not let yourselves be conformed to the standards of the 'olam hazeh. Instead, keep letting yourselves be transformed by the renewing of your minds; so that you will know what God wants and will agree that what he wants is good, satisfying and able to succeed.

Transformed in the Greek is a word you are all familiar with, metamorphoo {met-am-or-fo'-o}- Metamorphosis, to literally change form as a caterpillar transforms, Metamorphosis's into a butterfly. God been working on us as the heavens and world are being shaken to ween us off of this world and focus us back onto His Kingdom, transforming us into citizens of heaven with all the associated benefits, authority and power of that citizenship.

4. Do not Love this World:

I John 2:15-17. Do not love the world or the things of the world. If someone loves the world, then love for the Father is not in him; ¹⁶ because all the things of the world - the desires of the old nature, the desires of the eyes, and the pretensions of life - are not from the Father but from the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, along with its desires. But whoever does God's will remains forever.

God's will, will is thelema {thel'-ay-mah} in the Greek, what God wishes to be done, His commands and precepts! This is literally from the dictionary, people and theologians are not reading the source material!

5. Have no fear! There is no fear in God's perfect love:

I John 4:18. There is no fear in love. On the contrary, love that has achieved its goal gets rid of fear, because fear has to do with punishment; the person who keeps fearing has not been brought to maturity in regard to love.

This is critical for this hour. Achieving the goal or perfect is teleios {tel'-i-os} in the Greek, which means brought to its end, achieved its goal, consummate human integrity and virtue, adulthood, full maturity. Love is Agape, brotherly love, affection, good will, and benevolence. The fullness of God's love, Agape is equal to God's Shalom rooted in the word שלם (shaleim), which means completion, wholeness, wellness, Kingdom perfection, the absence of conflict. When we wish one another "Shalom" we are expressing the hope that we experience physical, emotional and psychological wholeness, wellness, and Kingdom perfection! This is what we exhibit in Agape Love!

6. God's Moedim, the Feast Days are God's process to unify us and make us one:

Leviticus 23:2. "Tell the people of Isra'el: 'The designated times of ADONAI which you are to proclaim as holy convocations are my designated times.

Convocation in Hebrew is Mikra (calling out of the holy ones) who's root word is Kaw-raw which means rehearsal. Mikra also means a calling together, a sacred assembly. The feasts are when God orders us to convene on His behalf regardless of your culture, your denomination, or your socioeconomic status! This is why the enemy battles so hard against eh Feast Days! The feast are our common core values that bind us together as one, it what sustained us as a people for over 2,000 years in diaspora. It brings unity:

Nehemiah 8:1-3. When the seventh month arrived, after the people of Isra'el had resettled in their towns, all the people gathered with one accord in the open space in front of the Water Gate and asked 'Ezra the Torah-teacher to bring the scroll of the Torah of Moshe, which ADONAI had commanded Isra'el. ² 'Ezra the cohen brought the Torah before the assembly, which consisted of men, women and all children old enough to understand. It was the first day of the seventh month. ³ Facing the open space in front of the Water Gate, he read from it to the men, the women and the children who could understand from early morning until noon; and all the people listened attentively to the scroll of the Torah

7. Our Mandate for the seasons we are in: Repent!

Acts 3:19. Therefore, repent and turn to God, so that your sins may be erased;

Purge yourself today, now, and come into the Fathers presence! We are to be Holy, set apart unto God! The theme and concern of Yom Kippur in Leviticus 16 is Holiness! Holiness is effervescent, transforming everything it touches into God's personal property! We are to be the Kings Holy Cohanim, His Holy Priests! Holiness was not and is not confined to just the Tabernacle, Temple, or Holy of Holies! The scriptures concern is for us to follow the pattern as outlined by God and come into His presence. It is the expectation of the Most High God that we be willing to sacrifice our lives unto Him. We must have discernment and be able to separate between the mundane and Holy, the Pure and un-pure! To get the pattern right! We are in the preparation stage just before Yom Kippur, Everything must be placed on the Altar before Him!

Repent:

Job 36:10. He sounds a warning in their ears and orders them to repent of their evil.

I John 1:8-10. If we claim not to have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we acknowledge our sins, then, since he is trustworthy and just, he will forgive them and purify us from all wrongdoing. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not been sinning, we are making him out to be a liar, and his Word is not in us.

Altar