

Nitzavim (You are Standing)!

This week's Torah portion is incredibly profound as we're preparing for Yom Teruah just a week away! The book of Deuteronomy is three dissertations or drosh's spoken by Moshe to the people of Israel. The last drosh is just before Moshe dies. He gives final directions, instructions, and prophetic words before Israel enters into the promise land after 40 years of wandering. Whatever physically happens in Israel there is a corresponding spiritual impact on the greater body! The body of Messiah in America experienced a great spiritual outpouring as a direct result of Israel being restored in 1948 and again when Jerusalem was restored back into our hand in June 1967! This last outpouring lasted over 10 years until the early 1980's. Since then, for the last approx. 40 years the greater body has been wandering in the wilderness! As Israel prepared to enter into the Promise Land Moshe's words were prophetically profound and ring true for us through the threads of time to today. I believe once again we are preparing to enter into the fullness of God's promise, the Messianic Reign, upon Yeshua's return! Yeshua returns at the sounding of the Shofar so the season were in right now, preparing for Yom Teruah is extremely profound and prophetic!! Nitzavim is actually a renewing or redoing of the wedding proposal first given at Mt. Sinai 40 years earlier. The previous generation said in:

Exodus 24:7. Then he took the book of the covenant and read it aloud, so that the people could hear; and they responded, "Everything that ADONAI has spoken, we will do and obey."

"Na'aseh v'nishma" "Na-aseh" means "we will do". Moses took the book of the covenant and read it aloud to the nation, and they said everything that Adonai told us we shall hear, keep, observe, and receive" - 'Naaseh VeNishma'. The heart and essence of the Sh'ma and what Israel answered to God upon hearing God's proposal was that they, Israel, would accept Torah even before knowing what it was all about! They voiced their trust but they were only hearers vice doers! They make this astounding proclamation then go on a few chapters later to create and worship the golden calf! They were punished by Adonai to wander in the Desert for 40 years until that entire generation had perished!

That previous generations children, now adults, must enter into and ratify the covenant, they must say "Na'aseh v'nishma" "I Do" just as every individual must do when entering into the Kingdom of God. The covenant is so inclusive that it reaches beyond the presentence of that generation 3,500 years ago to us here today, right now. Moses once again points out the consequences of violating the covenant and the severity of the punishment if not followed. He reminds them that each generation must adhere too and apply the provisions of Torah to their lives.

Deuteronomy 29: 10-15. "Today you are standing, all of you, before ADONAI your God - your heads, your tribes, your leaders and your officers - all the men of Isra'el, ¹¹ along

with your little ones, your wives and your foreigners here with you in your camp, from the one who chops your wood to the one who draws your water. ¹² The purpose is that you should enter into the covenant of ADONAI your God and into his oath which ADONAI your God is making with you today, ¹³ so that he can establish you today for himself as a people, and so that for you he will be God -as he said to you and as he swore to your ancestors, to Avraham, Yitz'chak and Ya'akov. ¹⁴ "But I am not making this covenant and this oath only with you. ¹⁵ Rather, I am making it both with him who is standing here with us today before ADONAI our God and also with him who is not here with us today.

Today, all of us are standing (actually sitting) before Adonai, young, old, leaders, workers, officers, men, woman, children, Jew and Gentile alike that we may stand in covenant relationship with Adonai in Yeshua!! We are that group in verse 14 that were not physically standing with them then, but the promise has transcended down through the span of ages to us today! We gather before Adonai with expectation and trembling fear in preparation for the High Holy Days! This is the Kingdom key! Each individual, every single one of us must make our own personal covenant decision to make Adonai our God!

Nitzavim, you are standing is about choices! Our lives consist of our choices. The choices we make brings about either blessings or curses. You set the precedence for your children's children and you suffer the consequences of your parents and grandparents choices. The reality of life is that there are consequences for our choices and actions-both good and bad. It's God's desire that we seek the good and choose life! Life is not about the individual merely roaming about and doing whatever they feel right according to their own eye, it's not limited to being a good person! That doesn't cut it: Read on!

Deuteronomy 29:18-20. So let there not be among you a man, woman, family or tribe whose heart turns away today from ADONAI our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Let there not be among you a root bearing such bitter poison and wormwood. ¹⁹ If there is such a person, when he hears the words of this curse, he will bless himself secretly, saying to himself, 'I will be all right, even though I will stubbornly keep doing whatever I feel like doing; so that I, although "dry," [sinful,] will be added to the "watered" [righteous].' ²⁰ But ADONAI will not forgive him. Rather, the anger and jealousy of ADONAI will blaze up against that person. Every curse written in this book will be upon him. ADONAI will blot out his name from under heaven.

These are sobering, condemning words for our society and cultures gender, identity confusion, sexual immorality, perverseness and wickedness. This is why obedience and repentance are so critical! It is crucial to understand the warning, it serves as a reminder to stay true to our faith and not be swayed by temptations or distractions that may lead us astray. The verse highlights the importance of remaining steadfast in our beliefs and avoiding actions that could bring curses upon ourselves by emphasizing the consequences of turning away from God and worshipping idols.

Imagine the pain and struggles that may arise if we choose to prioritize material possessions or worldly desires over our spiritual connection with God. The verse serves as a cautionary tale, urging us to reflect on our choices and ensure that we maintain a strong and unwavering commitment to our faith.

The relevance of these verses to our contemporary life is striking. The allure of following one's desires over God's commandments remains a prevalent temptation, leading individuals down paths of self-deception and false security. Today, as in ancient times, the warning against idolatry and spiritual complacency rings true, urging us to heed the lessons of Scripture and remain steadfast in our faith. Judah found out the hard way regarding this as they chose alternate paths which lead to their demise through Babylon!

Jeremiah 52:7-11. they broke through into the city. All the soldiers fled and left the city by night through the gate between the two walls, near the king's garden. Because the Kasdim were surrounding the city, they took the route through the 'Aravah. ⁸ But the army of the Kasdim went in pursuit of the king and overtook Tzidkiyahu on the plains near Yericho; all his troops deserted him. ⁹ Then they took the king and brought him up to the king of Bavel in Rivlah, in the land of Hamat, where he passed judgment on him. ¹⁰ The king of Bavel slaughtered his sons before his eyes; he also slaughtered all the leading men of Y'hudah in Rivlah. ¹¹ Then the king of Bavel put out Tzidkiyahu's eyes, bound him in chains, carried him off to Bavel and kept him in prison until the day of his death.

This is so hard to read! Solomon's Temple, one of the ancient world's seven wonders was being destroyed. It's heartbreaking to read of all the annihilation, the slaughter, the murder of men, women, and children, and the widespread destruction, looting, and burning! To have my children murdered before me is unimaginable! Yet it was the king's choice! Adonai said to humble himself, surrender to Babylon and they'd all survive and the temple would be destroyed! The word of God had been given! There could have been another ending, it didn't have to be this way! But the stiff-necked people chose otherwise! Burned and ransacked, the temple and Jerusalem were utterly destroyed! It leaves a heavy heart! It's never the same afterwards. A witness to disobedience! Yet how many believers act the same way! How many believers refuse to submit and repent!

By not following the Ancient Paths, the teachings, commands, and ways of the Lord as Moshe stated in Deuteronomy 29 Israel/Judah found themselves in captivity, ripped, exiled from the Land. They realize why this happened "Chosen Ekev" as a result of their disobedience as Moshe warned! This holds true for us as well but most fail to see it or choose not to see it this way! 99% of our own predicaments, our national apostasy from Adonai are due to Chosen Ekev-as a result of what we have done and how we've lived our lives! We either live according to the blessings or the curses!

When true T'shuva or repentance (turning from that which is sinful and turning back to God!) occurs Adonai will meet you, He responds, He Acts, Adonai sets the captives FREE. He Shavet-sh'vut'cha (He returns your return)

Deuteronomy 30:1-6. "When the time arrives that all these things have come upon you, both the blessing and the curse which I have presented to you; and you are there among the nations to which ADONAI your God has driven you; then, at last, you will start thinking about what has happened to you; ² and you will return to ADONAI your God and pay attention to what he has said, which will be exactly what I am ordering you to do today - you and your children, with all your heart and all your being. ³ At that point, ADONAI your God will reverse your exile and show you mercy; he will return **(Shavet-sh'vut'cha: returns, returns back to the starting point, released from captivity, restore fortunes)** and gather you from all the peoples to which ADONAI your God scattered you. ⁴ If one of yours was scattered to the far end of the sky, ADONAI your God will gather you even from there; he will go there and get you. ⁵ ADONAI your God will bring you back into the land your ancestors possessed, and you will possess it; he will make you prosper there, and you will become even more numerous than your ancestors. ⁶ Then ADONAI your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your children, so that you will love ADONAI your God with all your heart and all your being, and thus you will live.

Prophetically Moshe tells them they will fall short, they will be removed from the land (Diaspora, Exile) through their disobedience and rejection of Adonai! Moshe then shares the saving, redemptive grace, power, and Love of Adonai obtained through our T'Shuva, Repentance. When you return to the Lord your God He will return to you, release you from captivity, removing the yokes and fetters of bondage from you, restore your fortunes, returning your return with His Love, redemption, and salvation! (Good thing God doesn't hold grudges-if He acted like us no one would be in His Kingdom except Yeshua!). And Again, it's a choice:

Deuteronomy 30:15-20. "Look! I am presenting you today with, on the one hand, life and good; and on the other, death and evil - ¹⁶ in that I am ordering you today to love ADONAI your God, to follow his ways, and to obey his mitzvot, regulations and rulings ; for if you do, you will live and increase your numbers; and ADONAI your God will bless you in the land you are entering in order to take possession of it. ¹⁷ But if your heart turns away, if you refuse to listen, if you are drawn away to prostrate yourselves before other gods and serve them; ¹⁸ I am announcing to you today that you will certainly perish; you will not live long in the land you are crossing the Yarden to enter and possess. ¹⁹ "I call on heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have presented you with life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore, choose life, so that you will live, you and your descendants, ²⁰ loving ADONAI your God, paying attention to what he says and clinging to him - for that is the purpose of your life! On this depends the length of time you will live in the land ADONAI swore he would give to your ancestors Avraham, Yitz'chak and Ya'akov."

Moses calls upon heaven and earth to witness the covenant we've been presented with, life or death, the blessing or the curse-the necessity of choice. We must exercise our gift of Free Will Adonai created us with! This still hold true today! Our lives are the summation of our choices! If life only meant "Biological" there would be no choice. The choice is between living our lif in Covenant with Adonai and living life NOT in covenant with Adonai. From this understanding and

heavenly insight biological existence, even prosperity, if not in covenant with Adonai, constitutes death! Moses's presented us with the two choices, live or death, blessings or curse! Moshe tells us in verse 19 & 20:

Therefore, choose life, so that you will live, you and your descendants, ²⁰ loving ADONAI your God, paying attention to what he says and clinging to him - for that is the purpose of your life! On this depends the length of time you will live in the land ADONAI swore he would give to your ancestors Avraham, Yitz'chak and Ya'akov."

Choosing Adonai, living a covenant life with Him is the very purpose of our life! All of this presents a danger to us as subjects of the King today! So many say "I will stubbornly keep doing whatever I feel like doing". I've been shocked and amazed by peoples transparency! Talking with them after sinful situations, I'll ask if they knew their behavior was a sin and they always say yes! When I ask why they did so knowing its wrong they say "Because I wanted to". Idolizing the immorality and culture of the world, while caught in the trap of deceptions and distraction of our world! People creating their own truth to fit their own agenda, motives, and narratives regarding morality, ethics, gender, and sexuality! In doing so they remove Adonai from the center of their lives, trivializing and ignoring the realm of the supernatural! We possess the same free will and choice this generation did over 3,500 years ago.

This is the season of repentance with the coming of Yom Teruah one week from tonight at Sunset, service here at 7:30PM! The season of choice! Who will you serve? Return unto Him and he will return to you! This cannot be some historical event that we study and read about and maybe even idolize but it must become real in our daily life. We make the choice, we make history. The correct choice stops us from repeatedly dancing around the same mountain of afflictions, addictions, immorality, and oppressions that plaque the greater body. This is the essence of Bar and Bat Mitzvahs-those young people make their choice of whom to serve and even then, some still choose to depart from it and when they do-the consequences they will face are duly recorded in scripture! Shavet-sh'vut'cha carries through to the Brit Chadesha:

James 4:8. Come close (eggizo {eng-id'-zo}: draw near, to bring near, to join one thing to another, draw close, come near, to approach, draw nigh, "to make nigh" as equivalent to "to make a proselyte") to God, and He will come close (eggizo {eng-id'-zo}: draw near, to bring near, to join one thing to another, draw close, come near, to approach, draw nigh, "to make nigh" as equivalent to "to make a proselyte") to you. Clean your hands, sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded people!

As we enter into Yom Teruah next week we begin the 10 days of awe. I ask of you to reflect over the past year! To ask "What have I done for God", what is your priority? Not what you think you did or things that don't pertain to the Kingdom-but literally what have you done! Where have a fallen short, my shortcomings, my sin? Can you write it down and list it on paper? We all have

families and commitments to jobs, careers, and a multitude of various distractions-but is that consuming all of your time and God gets what's left? Have you spent a day fasting and in prayer? Do you pray every day for Israel, Jerusalem, and for Israel's salvation? Where is God on your priorities scale? 1, 2, 3----is He even on your priority list? Have you spent more time making money than time with God? **WHAT WAS YOUR FRUIT LAST YEAR?** Are you committed in Tithing (Real tithing), giving your time and your talents to Adonai, Yeshua, and the Kingdom of Heaven!

THIS IS THE TIME AND SEASON TO REFLECT BACK UPON THE LAST YEAR-IF YOU'RE NOT BEING EFFECTIVE AND PRODUCING FRUIT IT'S TIME TO START. IF YOUR PRODUCING FRUIT, ITS TIME FOR PRUNING AND PRODUCING MORE!

Ephesians 5:15-17. Therefore, pay careful attention to how you conduct your life - live wisely, not unwisely. ¹⁶ Use your time well, for these are evil days. ¹⁷ So don't be foolish, but try to understand what the will of the Lord is.

Sha'ul encourages us to live our lives with wisdom and discernment, seeking to understand and align ourselves with Adonai's will. We can make the most of every opportunity that presents itself to us. The key message here is about living intentionally and purposefully, recognizing the importance of our choices and actions in the grander scheme of things.

It's like this, every decision we make, every interaction we have, every opportunity we pursue, has the potential to either bring us closer to God's plan for us or steer us away from it. We can ensure that we are on the right path, making the most of the time and resources we have been given by living wisely and seeking to understand God's will. This verse challenges us to be mindful and intentional in our daily lives, constantly seeking to grow in our understanding of God's purpose for us and seizing every opportunity to live out that purpose. TO ask and inquire of Him!

Sha'ul challenges us to be deliberate in our choices, ensuring that they align with God's principles rather than worldly desires. By urging us to be "wise" and not "unwise," the passage highlights the importance of discernment and spiritual insight in navigating life's complexities. It serves as a guiding light for those seeking to live purposefully in a world filled with distractions and challenges.

Stir up the gifts in you! Arise and Shine, the Light has Come! Know His will! Abba will take care of you! He will provide-jobs, food, shelter, money! Do not be concerned with what's happening around you! 1,000 may fall on your left and 10,000 on your right but you, you will prosper and flourish as a child of God! Be bold, use your time wisely for the Kingdom!

Luke 5:16. However, he made a practice of withdrawing to remote places in order to pray.

Yeshua, fully man, fully God, divine Messiah made a practice, He kept to a routine of prayer! He told us we would do all that He did and even more but to do so requires me to be a committed Talmidim and do what He did! I'm not praying and fasting enough even though I've doubled my time in the last three months! I must engage in a daily routine, maintain a practice of prayer so that the worlds distractions may be removed and I clearly hear Adonai's voice!

Repentance is a change of mind that leads to a change of action, turning away from sin and toward God. It is not just regretting wrongdoing, but a decisive decision to align your life with God's will. Repentance is not a one-time event but a daily rhythm. As Yochanan challenged Believers is:

Matthew 3:8. If you have really turned from your sins to God, produce fruit that will prove it!

We must continually turn from sin and live in obedience to God. Repentance opens the door to God's mercy, healing, and guidance. It removes barriers of pride and self-reliance, allowing a deeper, more authentic relationship with Him.

Repentance leads to restoration. Adonai promises in Deuteronomy 30 that our exile will not last forever. "Then the Lord your G-d will return your captivity and have compassion upon you, and He will return and gather you from all the peoples among whom the Lord your G-d has scattered you" (Devarim 30:3).

Two verses later, Moshe goes even further: "And the Lord your G-d will bring you to the Land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it" (30:5).

Remarkably, this verse: Deuteronomy 30:5, is the 5,708th verse in the Torah. The State of Israel was established in the Hebrew year 5708, corresponding to 1948. And the very verse bearing that number speaks of God bringing the Jewish people back to their ancestral homeland and of their taking possession of it once again!

For nearly two thousand years, those words were a promise waiting to be fulfilled. Jews recited them in countries where they were guests, strangers and, all too often, unwanted. They prayed toward Jerusalem while living under the rule of others. In our time, the promise became reality. Our Jewish people returned to their Land and restored Jewish sovereignty as prophesied.

As Messianic Jews who believe and receive Yeshua, we understand that we have been sealed in the Ruach HaKodesh. Yet reflection and repentance must be an ongoing part of our relationships with God. The time preceding the High Holidays are a perfect time to dedicate extra focus to assessing our lives before the Lord.