

TIKKUN AMERICA

restore

Issue 51 | Tishrei | October 2025



PRAYER ALTARS

Worship, Israel, and the Unfolding Purposes of God

A'SHAMNU, AL CHET, AND YOM KIPPUR

Intercessors for the World

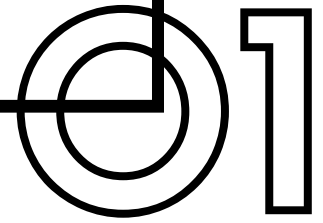
SHOULD I STAY, OR SHOULD I GO?

Covenant Life and Biblical Order in the Body of Messiah

THE BODY AS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, PT3

Ezekiel's Temple

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Justice and Mercy

BENJAMIN JUSTER

As we enter the season of the High Holidays—Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot—we are confronted with the sobering reality that God will one day judge the entire world. These days are called the Yamim Nora'im, the “Days of Awe,” precisely because they force us to consider the holiness and authority of the Creator who holds our very lives in His hands.

For many of us, this thought is unsettling. How do we reconcile the image of a loving, merciful Father with the reality of a righteous Judge who will separate the righteous from the wicked?

From our limited human perspective, it is difficult to comprehend a God who will ultimately condemn the unrepentant to eternal separation, anguish, and torment.

Our natural tendency is to focus on the severity of God’s punishments, perhaps imagining them as overly harsh or unfair. Yet at the same time, each of us has been created with a built-in sense of justice—a reflection of God’s own image stamped upon our soul’s. Even from childhood, we instinctively know when we have been wronged.

“That’s Not Fair!” – A Glimpse of Our Need for Justice

If you are a parent, you’ve likely experienced this firsthand. Perhaps you’ve had to mediate a dispute between two of your children over a toy. After listening to both sides, you declare, “It’s Billy’s turn to play with the toy,” or, “It takes two to argue, so both of you need to have a time-out.” Inevitably, one of the children will cross their arms, stomp their foot, and cry out, “THAT’S NOT FAIR!”

This simple moment reveals a profound truth: we all crave justice. We want fairness when we have been mistreated or overlooked. We long for wrongs to be righted and for the vulnerable to be protected. And moreover, social activists take a visible stand and work tirelessly to bring restitution for the injured or abused.

The Scriptures are full of God’s commands for His people to uphold justice. In Deuteronomy 16:20 TLV, God declares to Israel: *“Justice, justice you must pursue, so that you may live and possess the land that Adonai your God is giving you.”*

Biblical justice is not merely about punishment. It is about protecting the poor, marginalized, and mistreated. The prophets of Israel repeatedly called the nation to repentance, not only for idolatry, but also for neglecting justice and showing partiality toward the



powerful (Isaiah 1:17; Amos 5:24). God’s heart is especially tender toward the orphan, widow, and stranger (Deuteronomy 10:18-19).

The Tension Between Justice and Mercy

But here lies the challenge: how can a perfectly just God also be merciful?

Justice is objective. It demands that the guilty be punished according to the exacting standard of the Law. **Mercy, on the other hand, is subjective.** It chooses to withhold punishment, even when it is deserved.

From a purely legal perspective, this creates a dilemma. If God is perfectly just, then every sin must be accounted for. *“The soul that sins, he will die”* (Ezekiel 18:20). Yet if God is merciful, how can He forgive without compromising His justice?

The answer is found in Yeshua the Messiah. Only through His sacrificial death and resurrection can justice and mercy meet in perfect harmony. At the cross, justice was fully satisfied—our sins were paid for in full. And mercy was poured out as Yeshua bore the penalty we deserved.

Paul writes in Romans 3:25-26 TLV:

“God set forth Yeshua as an atonement, through faith in His blood, to show His righteousness in passing over sins already committed. Through God’s forbearance, He demonstrates His righteousness at the present time—that He Himself is just and also the justifier of the one who puts his trust in Yeshua.”

We are still guilty. Our good deeds, religious observances, and personal efforts cannot erase the stain of sin. Only Yeshua’s blood pays our debt and guarantees that we will receive mercy instead of judgment.





This is why the themes of the High Holidays are so significant for believers today. Rosh Hashanah reminds us that there will be a final day of reckoning when God will judge all nations. Yom Kippur points to our desperate need for atonement through Messiah's sacrifice. And Sukkot celebrates the joy of restored fellowship and dwelling with God.

Mercy for the Dependent, Not the Self-Sufficient

Mercy is rarely given to the strong or self-sufficient. It is extended to those who acknowledge their weakness and need for grace. Yeshua told the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:9-14). The Pharisee boasted of his righteousness, while the tax collector simply cried out, "God, be merciful to me, the sinner!"

Yeshua declared that it was the tax collector—not the Pharisee—who went home justified before God. In the same way, we must come to the High Holidays with humility, admitting our utter dependence on God's mercy through Messiah.

As Messianic believers, we live in the tension of knowing both the seriousness of God's judgment and the extravagance of His grace. This tension should lead us to personal repentance, deeper worship, and compassionate action toward others.

Three Challenges for Application

As we reflect on these themes, here are three ways to apply this message during the High Holidays:

1. Examine Your Heart Before God (Psalm 139:23-24 TLV)

“Search me, O God, and know my heart. Examine me, and know my anxious thoughts, and see if there be any offensive way within me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Challenge yourself to spend intentional time in self-examination and prayer. Ask the *Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit) to reveal areas of unconfessed sin, bitterness, or compromise. Write down what He shows you, then bring it before the Lord in repentance.

The High Holidays are not merely about communal traditions—they are a personal invitation to return to God with sincerity. Just as Israel prepared for Yom Kippur through ten days of introspection, we too must prepare our hearts to receive His mercy afresh.

2. Extend Mercy to Others (Matthew 5:7 TLV)

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy.”

God’s mercy toward us should overflow into our relationships with others. Is there someone you need to forgive? A relationship that needs healing? A person you’ve judged harshly instead of showing compassion?



Choose to demonstrate tangible acts of mercy. This could mean reconciling with a family member, serving someone in need, or simply offering grace in a situation where you were wronged. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, famous Jewish Theologian of blessed memory, reflects, “When I was young, I admired clever people. Now that I am old, I admire kind people. Forgiveness is the highest form of kindness.”

3. Proclaim the Good News of Messiah’s Mercy (2 Corinthians 5:20 TLV)

“We are therefore ambassadors for Messiah, as though God were making His appeal through us. We beg you on behalf of Messiah, be reconciled to God.”

The High Holidays are not only a time for personal renewal but also an opportunity to share the hope of Yeshua with others.

Many in the Jewish community experience these days with a deep sense of fear and uncertainty, wondering if their names will be inscribed in the Book of Life.

We have the joy of proclaiming that Messiah has made a way for eternal life through His atoning sacrifice. Look for opportunities to share your testimony, invite someone to your congregation, or simply explain the meaning of these holy days in light of Yeshua's fulfillment.

Living in Awe of God's Perfect Justice and Mercy

As we walk through this season, let us hold fast to the truth that God is both perfectly just and profoundly merciful. His judgments are righteous, and His mercy is limitless for those who turn to Him in repentance and faith.

C.S. Lewis once wrote, *"There are only two kinds of people: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, in the end, 'Thy will be done.'"*

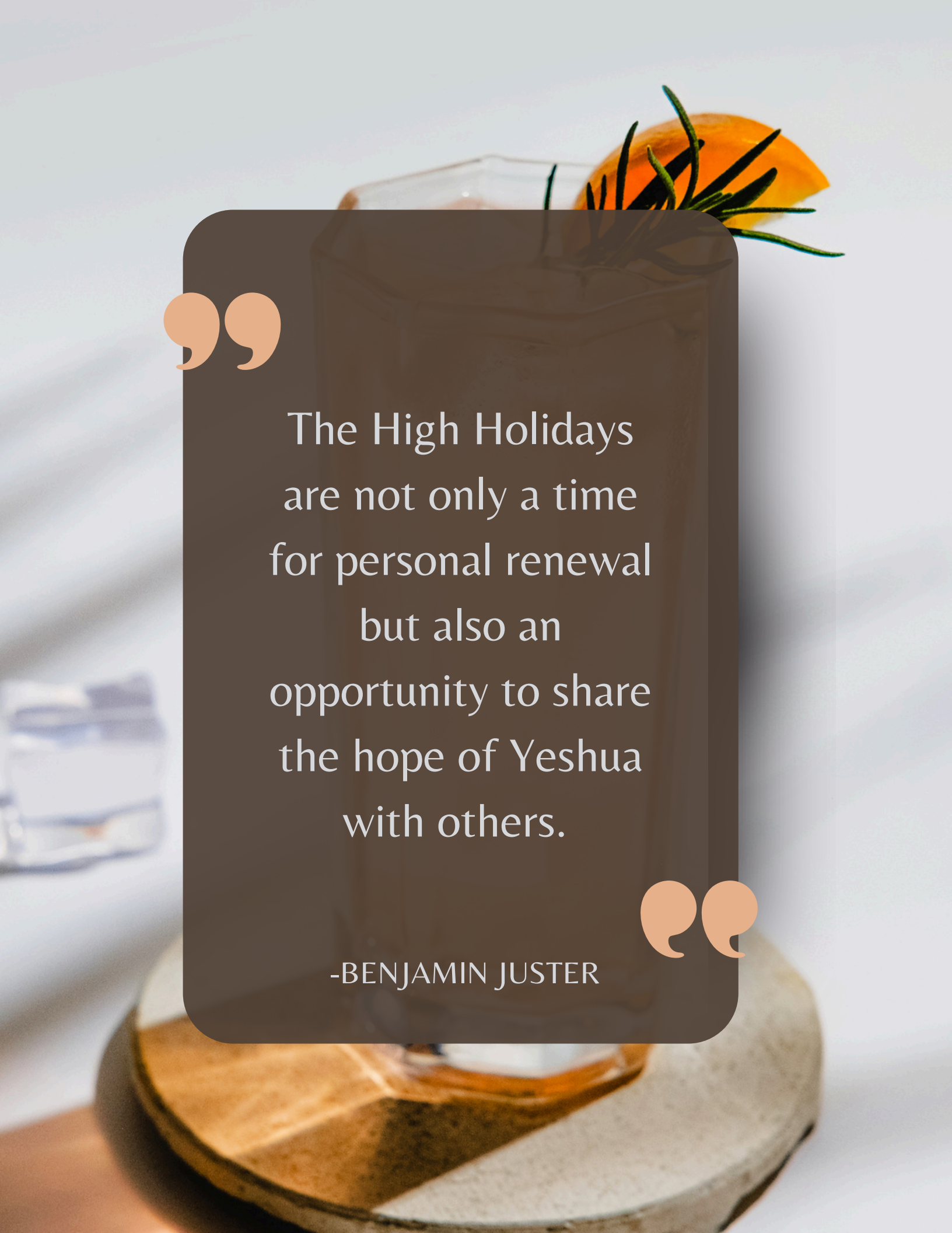


May we be among those who surrender fully to His will, trusting in the blood of Yeshua to cover our sins, and boldly extending His mercy to others. As we hear the sound of the shofar and prepare our hearts, may our response echo the ancient words of the prophet Micah:

"He has told you, humanity, what is good, and what Adonai is seeking from you: Only to practice justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8 TLV



Benjamin Juster
Editor in Chief



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”

-BENJAMIN JUSTER



MORGAN KRUPINSKI

ASHAMNU AL CHET AND YOM KIPPUR

There is a unique sense of Awe you can experience during a Yom Kippur service. During the Erev (evening) service Kol Nidre, a prayer annulling all vows, is recited. Traditionally done three times, it is recited with greater intensity and rises from a hushed tone to a fever pitch. This prayer was a later addition added to the Yom Kippur liturgy and represents the canceling of vows between God and man. It sets the stage for the roller coaster of emotional and deeply remorseful liturgy of the following day.

The major confessional prayer of Yom Kippur is recited multiple times during the holiday and consists of two parts, the A'Shamnu, and the Al Chet. Both are uniquely recited as individual worshippers in the context of first-person plural tense. The A'Shamnu is a simple prayer, with each phrase being only one or two Hebrew words. Each line admits our guilt both personally, and communally.



We are culpable (אָשָׁמְנוּ). We have betrayed (בִּגְדָנוּ). We have stolen.(גָּזַלְנוּ) We have slandered. (דִּבְרָנוּ דִּפִּי)

The proceeding section, the Al Chet, likewise holds a unique tradition. The Al Chet is broken up into sections in reciting certain which we sins we commit. Our english translations often have a repetitive phrasing.

For the sin we have committed by ... and for the sin of ...

This list is long. For each sin we recite, we clench our hand and beat our chest while reciting the name of each sin. Twice for ones that we know we are especially guilty of.

While we acknowledge our personal guilt, the congregation pleads loudly the following refrain.

"For all these, God of pardon, pardon us, forgive us, atone for us."

How awe inspiring. Yom Kippur challenges us to return to God in personal repentance by joining communally to ask for forgiveness. We all bear both the guilt and weight of the sins of this world that we inflict upon each other. We suffer both individually and communally due to the effects of sin. As the (kedoshim) called out people of God, and on Yom Kippur we are called to an even higher standard when praying these words. Our sense of awe should increase as we press into God while reciting these prayers.

This sense of awe we feel is knowing that we come to God in desperate need of His grace. As Messianic Jews and believers from the Nations, this sorrowful examination during this time comes with a sweet hope and truth which we all rely upon. We know that we can come boldly to the throne of grace made perfect by Yeshua's atonement and resurrection. Hebrews thus encourages us:

But when Messiah appeared as Kohen Gadol of the good things that have now come, passing through the greater and more perfect Tent not made with hands (that is to say not of this creation), He entered into the Holies once for all – not by the blood of goats and calves but by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Messiah—who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God – cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:11-14 TLV)

The Messiah's role as our (Kohen Gadol) Great High Priest changes everything for us during these prayers. The awe and fear of God is something we tangibly experience in these prayers, yet filled with a sweet hope and assurance of the blood of Messiah cleansing our conscience. It is not that our repentance is cheap then, may it never be! It is through this cleansing that we are unburdened by the entangling weight of sin to focus our eyes on Yeshua and run the race He has set before us. And our race is to spread the glorious message of the Kingdom of God in power, healing, and restoration.



In this, our Yom Kippur prayer enables us to become intercessors for not only ourselves before the Father, but also for the entire world! As we look into a broken society, filled with violence and pain, we can cry out for our communities, sure that our God hears us,

“For all these, God of pardon, pardon us, forgive us, atone for us.”

As Messianic Jews, we can plead and ask forgiveness for the sins of the wider Church when it teaches antisemitic and replacement theology,

“For all these, God of pardon, pardon us, forgive us, atone for us.”

As believers from the Nations, we can plead for the salvation of Israel and turning of hardened hearts and say,

“For all these, God of pardon, pardon us, forgive us, atone for us.”

As Americans living in a deeply divided and polarized culture that celebrates the hatred of our neighbor, we can cry out to our Redeemer and say,

“For all these, God of pardon, pardon us, forgive us, atone for us.”

Our prayers have true power, as we are empowered by the Spirit that has been poured out on us in our reconciliation with God through Messiah Yeshua. During this season, and Days of Awe, embrace the opportunity we have to become intercessors for not only ourselves, but for the entire world.



*Our Yom Kippur
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MORGAN KRUPINSKI



Prayer Altars

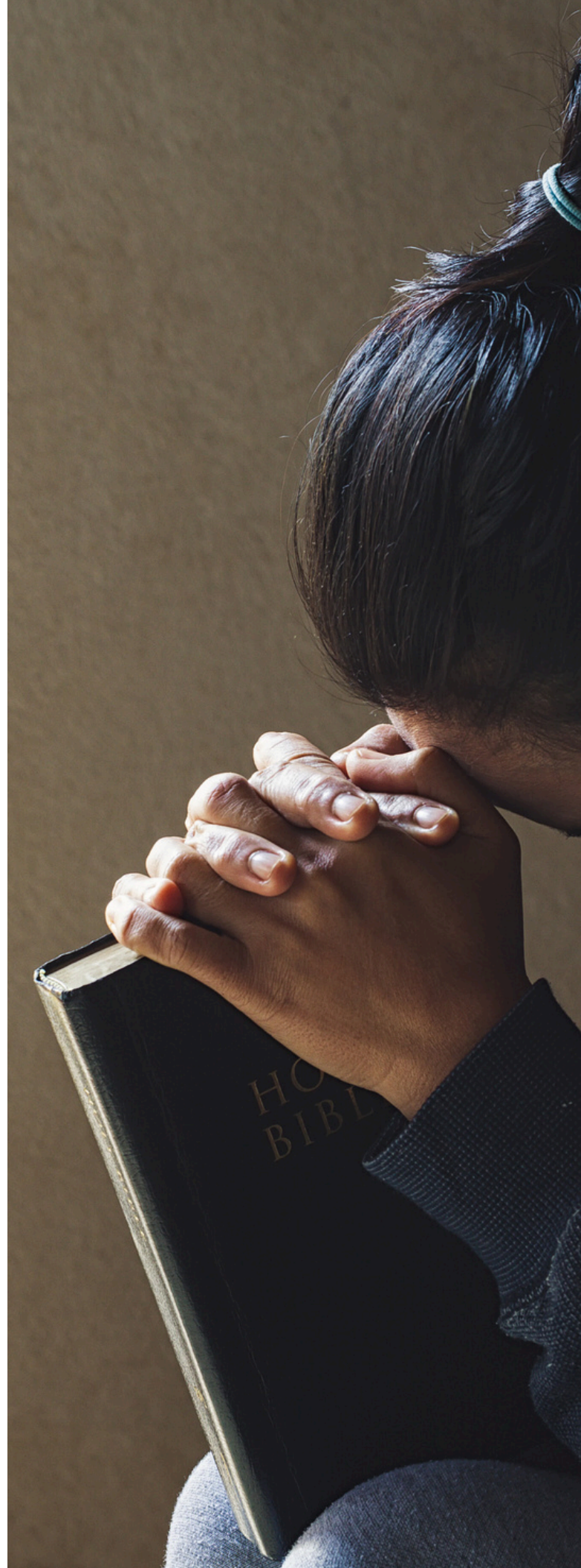
MARTY SHOUB

Plans were underway. Sukkot 2020 in the Jordan Valley was set to be a joyous, prophetic celebration. The nations were invited to build their sukkah's in the Jordan River Regional Park, just below Kibbutz Beit Zerah. We anticipated that a thousand people would join us. I was responsible for arranging tours from the site to nearby Galilean attractions. How many buses would we need? Three? Six? Could we shuttle back and forth to reduce costs? This was a major event – or so we had hoped. No one anticipated that the pandemic of 2020 would shut Israel down for over two years. Like so many others, our plans were scrapped. The great Sukkot 2020 celebration fizzled out in disappointment.

Dean Bye, founder of Return Ministries, had been the chief architect for planning this international Galilee event. Two years previously, Dean and I met Dr. John Mulinde in Uganda. Dr. John is one of the pioneers of the 24/7 prayer movement. He coined the phrase, “prayer altar,” while travelling in Israel in the early 1980s.

From Abraham's story, Dr. John understood that God wanted to restore prayer altars in Israel and around the world. Unlike the "prayer meeting" with a set, or fixed agenda, "prayer altars" would instead center around worship and waiting upon God. Dr. John's base, Prayer Mountain, on the outskirts of Kampala, was a 24/7 prayer mountain devoted to worship. Believers from all over the world still make a pilgrimage to Prayer Mountain to seek God's face. Dean's vision for the Sukkot gathering in Galilee would take the format of Prayer Mountain to the Jordan Valley. Dean as a result identified this as, "... taking prayer from the mountain to the valley."

Dean's vision, so full of promise, seemed lost through the shutdown plaguing the world. Dean was perplexed. He was sure he had received the vision from the Lord, but it seemed all for naught. In early 2021, Dean had a dream: He was on a stage. He was supposed to be ministering together with Dr. John Mulinde, but Dr. John was nowhere to be seen. As Dean looked around the stage, he noticed a laptop on the podium. Dean opened the computer, and Dr. John Mulinde was looking back at him on a video feed. The dream ended, and Dean woke up, pondering what this might actually mean.



Dean consulted with Dr. John and several other trusted advisors. They concluded that the Holy Spirit was revealing that the mandate to gather the nations to pray for Israel continued – not at a specific location in Galilee, but virtually online – gathering believers from across the world to pray for Israel, and specifically for aliyah (going up before the Lord in prayer), 24 hours a day, and 7 days a week!

Planning began, and Dean was introduced to Krista Smith, an intercessor skilled in website design. In a very short time, Krista developed the website platform to host the altar. Just a few months later, on Passover 2021, the Altar of Prayer was inaugurated.

The 24/7 format for Altar of Prayer (AOP) divides the week into eight three-hour watches, fifty-six watches per week, with the first watch of the day beginning at sundown Jerusalem time. Each watch has a watch leader responsible for directing the course of the watch, calling on watch members to pray, and often adding a half-hour teaching segment at the beginning of the watch. The host is joined by a “firekeeper” responsible for the technical aspects of the watch, including video worship sets and teaching clips.

To participate in the “Altar of Prayer,” (AOP) prospective watch, members must register to access the Zoom platform. This provides a layer of security against unwanted intrusions. To date, approximately four thousand people have registered for the AOP, and over one hundred nations represented on the AOP.



Most watches are conducted in English, but there are also Cambodian, Dutch, French and Spanish watches. The AOP is non-denominational, layperson-oriented, with one common agenda to pray for Israel’s restoration and the return of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland. Regular watches are punctuated by special watches coinciding with Israel’s feast days. These watches may include special worship sets, guest speakers from Israel and specific prayer mandates.

24/7 worship houses are difficult to manage. Orchestrating a schedule of watches, including consistent volunteers for early morning hours, is a serious challenge. The beauty of a virtual watch is that no brick-and-mortar facility is required, and it is always noon somewhere around the globe. Folks from different nations can tailor their watches to meet at reasonable times within their time zones. This makes room for people who otherwise could not participate in a fixed location, 24/7 prayer house.



The Altar of Prayer began with a vision for an event in Galilee. After a disappointing setback, AOP re-emerged as a virtual platform supporting 24/7 intercession. The AOP reflects a new wave of prayer that, before our generation, had never been achieved. Believers from around the world are joining together in prayer. Geography no longer hinders our ability to unite as one.

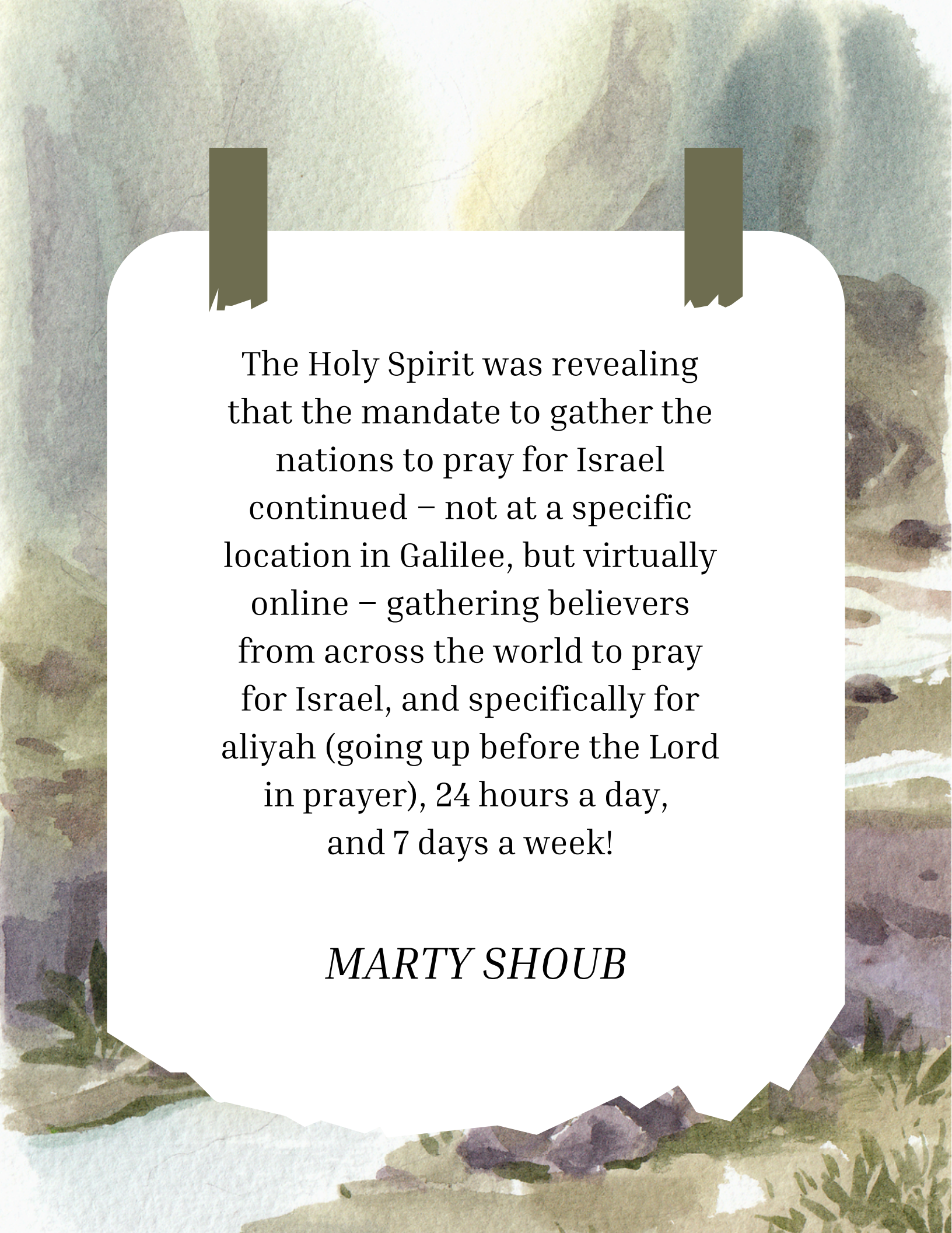
Revelation 5:8 depicts heavenly beings before God's throne with "golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints." Revelation 8:1-5 pictures this incense/prayer being offered upon a heavenly golden altar as part of the sequence unfolding the seven trumpet judgements of Revelation 8:6-9:19; 11:15-19.

"And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel." (Rev. 8:3-4 ESV)

Our prayers offered on earth somehow play a significant role in unfolding Heaven's cosmic purposes. This is a profound act of worship. From our earthly perspective, we cannot measure the impact of our intercession. The vision of Revelation provides us with a heavenly context to earnestly devote ourselves to ongoing intercession. The Altar of Prayer is not the only platform virtually connecting believers in prayer. There are many good resources similar to AOP. I would encourage Tikkun America members to consider participating in AOP. We are solely engaged in intercession for Israel, and our international AOP members are keen to learn how to pray from a Messianic perspective.

To join us, register at www.altarofprayer.com.





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MARTY SHOUB

THE BODY AS pt.3 THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

ZACHARY WILLIAMS

The focus of this series of articles has been to explore how the biblical concept that believers are the Temple of the Holy Spirit is not just an analogy or parable, but in fact a teaching intended by God to help the believer understand deeper spiritual truths. In the first two articles, I showed how there is an intended deeper meaning of what God is showing us in the Tabernacle as well as seen in the camp laid out in Numbers 2, as well as Ezekiel's vision in Ezekiel chapter 1.

Following this same line of thinking, the Temple described in Ezekiel chapters 40-48 serves as a profound learning tool for what God has in mind for His people. Even though the vision was given after the first Temple was destroyed, and yet, before the second Temple was constructed, the description is of a Temple that has not yet existed.

That leaves room for speculation about what the final fulfillment of that vision really looks like. However, there is evidence in the text to suggest Ezekiel's Temple is what the Temple during the Millennial Kingdom of Yeshua will look like. Returning to the idea that we are the Temple of the Holy Spirit, what can we glean from Ezekiel's Temple to describe aspects of how His people should be?

Here are some thoughts of how to apply some of these lessons to our lives based on portions of Ezekiel's Temple:

1. Ezekiel 36-37 is a New Covenant prophecy similar to Jeremiah 30-31. Adonai's Servant David (pointing to Yeshua) will be their Prince forever (Ezekiel 37:24-25). The Temple in Ezekiel 40-48 is part of the fulfillment of that New Covenant with the Prince as the head of the people of God.

The New Covenant sets an important context for Ezekiel's Temple. Since Ezekiel's vision of this Temple is tied to the fulfillment of the New Covenant, we cannot separate our hope of salvation from the things that Adonai has said He will do in the Millennial Kingdom – even if we do not understand them or why He chooses them. Either your hope is in Him fulfilling His Word, or your hope is in Him fulfilling your own desires.

Choose wisely ...



2. The Glory of Adonai returns to this Temple through the East Gate, and that Glory matches the vision in Ezekiel 1 & 8 (Ezekiel 43:1-7). That East Gate is shut, and nobody is allowed to enter through it. The Prince enters through a porch at the East Gate and eats at the gate, but even the angel guiding Ezekiel takes him around to the North Gate instead of the East Gate (Ezekiel 44:1-4).

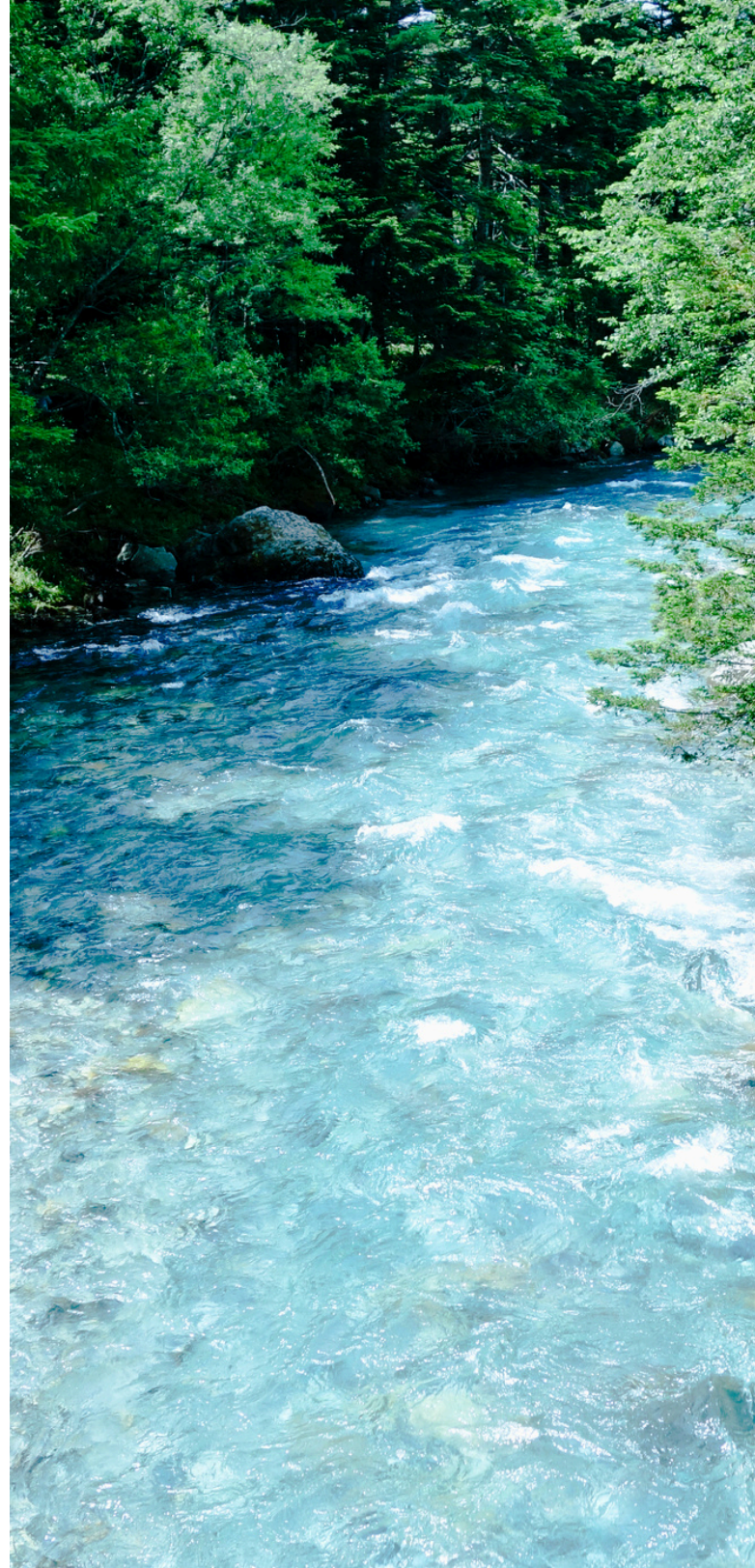
Proverbs 14:28 says that a large population is a king's glory. Adonai in all His glory chose to represent His glory with representations of His people with Him Like a queen next to her king, we should be honored to stand with Adonai in all His glory.

3. We are told that the measurements and commandments of this Temple should cause us to be ashamed and repent of our sins (Ezekiel 43:10-12).

Adonai's work is to create a clean and holy place to dwell with His redeemed people. Seeing such a clear and specific vision of worshipping with Yeshua in the Millennial Kingdom should lead us to repentance for our sins and ways that do not effectively represent Him to the world here and now. Rather than trying to represent our idea of who Adonai is, we should repent, and thus better represent who He reveals Himself to be through the Scriptures and within the revelation of His glory.

4. The Moedim are re-instituted, even with some new ceremonies such as new Pesach and Sukkot ceremonies at this Temple (Ezekiel 45:18-25). The Prince is the one who must give the offerings at the Moedim. That was not allowed by anyone except the Levites, so this Prince is acting as the High Priest at the times of the Moedim (Ezekiel 45:16-17).

The Moedim are a critical part of our faith and practice. You might even ask if they are fulfilled, why would we continue to celebrate them in the Millennial Kingdom? Well, have you ever heard of a healthy marriage that did not celebrate their wedding anniversary? The continued celebration of the work of Yeshua in the Moedim is a critical part of our current and future relationship with our King.



5. Living water (Mayim Chayim) flows out from under the doorway of the Temple and turns into a mighty river which flows down through the valleys to the Dead Sea to make part of the Dead Sea alive and filled with many fish (Ezekiel 47:1-12).



The vision of the living water coming from the Temple is very likely Yeshua's 'source material' for His teaching on living water to the Samaritan woman in John chapter 4. The living water is the water that we drink from Yeshua and are never thirsty again, and it is also the living water that pours forth from the Temple of the Holy Spirit, and into our hearts - which springs up to eternal life (John 4:13-14)

6. The inheritances are renewed, given to all the tribes, as foreigners are grafted in, and settle within the Tribes, and likewise receive and inheritances themselves right along the naturally born branches (Ezekiel 47:13-23).

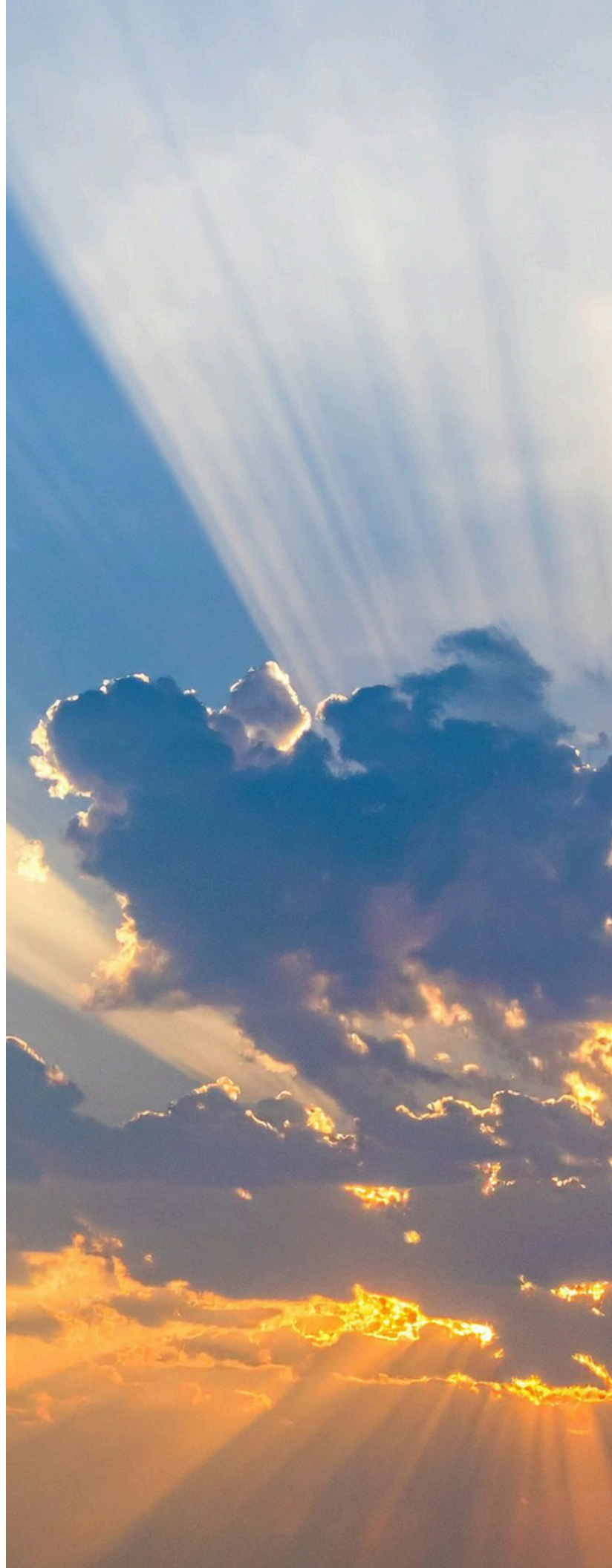
As Messianics, both Jew and Gentile, we are the closest thing to the One New Man (Ephesian 2:14-16) until the Millennial Kingdom. We are the bridge which brings together Jews and Christians, and shows the world how we can be one in Messiah. Our definition of what it means to be one in Messiah should more closely match the unity shown here in Ezekiel chapter 47 rather than the divisions of the last 2000 years.

7. From that day forward, the name of the city is "Adonai is there" (Ezekiel 48:35).

The world should be able to tell that Adonai is with us, and that His glory is in our lives. Not just individually, but as the whole Body of Messiah. Being with Adonai in the future only happens for us if here and now we live in the faith and obedience He calls us to. In that faith and obedience, He can reveal Himself to the world today so they too can believe.

As seen with the Tabernacle and the Temples – including Ezekiel’s Temple – there is much the Scriptures can teach us about what it means to be the Temple of the Holy Spirit. I hope this 3-part series has blessed and encouraged you. I also hope that the revelation of the Messiah that Paul so longed to teach, is made manifest within your life. “For this reason I bow my knees before the Father – from Him every family in heaven and on earth receives its name.”

I pray that from His glorious riches He would grant you to be strengthened in your inner being with power through His Ruach, so that the Messiah may dwell in your hearts through faith. I pray that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to grasp with the kedoshim what is the width and length and height and depth, and to know the love of the Messiah which surpasses knowledge, so you may be filled up with all the fullness of God.” (Ephesians 3:14-19).





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The world should be able to tell that Adonai is with us, and that His glory is in our lives.

ZACHARY WILLIAMS

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Should I Stay, or Should I Go?

MARK RANTZ

In 1982, Mick Jones of The Clash wrote, *“Should I Stay or Should I Go”* where the chorus asks,

*“Should I stay, or should I go now?
Should I stay, or should I go now? If I
go, there will be trouble. And if I stay, it
will be double. So come on and let me
know.”*

Not an immediate hit, this song reached its height of popularity in 1991, not in America, but in the UK, and is now marked as an iconic song for the period.

According to Jones, this song was not a love song, but instead “... a more general meditation on human indecision” emerging from a time of fatigue in the band manifested by a constant touring and vigorous recording schedule. In reading this, some might question *“Why I would reference such a lyric for a Messianic article, and wondering if there is a method to my madness?”*

The truth is, this song, in many ways, mirrors what Jones identifies as indecision, as seen in culture concerning an inability to trust, commit, and build life-long relationships. Although The Clash never offers a solution for our human dilemma, (especially here in the West) the reality remains that in our flesh, we are more bent on selfishness, narcissism and self-sabotage than willful vulnerability, a life-long commitment to the other, and a collective identity with something bigger than ourselves.

For us as believers in Yeshua, this challenge is most seen in how many envision, and live out their lives within the local church or Messianic congregation. Although we would all hope that it was different, many believers are not properly disciplined, and many congregational leaders have failed to instruct their people on the importance of covenant relationships and mutual accountability. For leaders within Tikkun, such seems to be engrained within our spiritual DNA, but do our people fully grasp its central, overarching importance? We must never forget God's mandate for us to live in community and fulfill the calling placed on us in Messiah Yeshua.

This is best seen in Yeshua's calling in John chapter 17 for us to live in unity where He exhorts,

"I pray not on behalf of these only, but also for those who believe in Me through their message, *that they all may be one.*



Just as You, Father, are in Me and I am in You, *so also may they be one in Us*, so the world may believe that You sent Me." (vs. 20-21 TLV emphasis mine)

From this you may ask, how is it that this passage addresses our problem above where so many are bent on selfishness, narcissism and self-sabotage? What can Yeshua's admonition to us teach us concerning covenant relationships, and congregational life? To both understand and apply this important point we must first recognize that the model of unity to which we are called should reflect that same unity that we see between Yeshua Himself and our Heavenly Father. Although we are not as the Lord is, still we must never forget that in the Godhead there is no division,



contradiction, and never a destructive spirit of disunity. Instead, Avinu our Father, Yeshua the Son, and the Ruach HaKodesh is forever consistent as divine covenantal love! So this is our calling to one another, and although we are perfect as Adonai is, still we are called to imitate our Messiah and His high calling on our lives. For this reason we are told,

“Be imitators of God, as dearly loved children; and walk in love, just as Messiah also loved us and gave Himself up for us as an offering and sacrifice to God for a fragrant aroma.”
(Eph. 5:1-2)

Have you ever considered that following Yeshua is not simply a personal endeavor, but instead, defined by our faithfulness to “... walk in love” toward one another, where faithfulness is compared to the Lord’s own example who “... as an offering and sacrifice to God for a fragrant aroma?” Our calling to biblical unity and accountability is received by God as worship, offering a fragrant aroma before the throne room of God. Where once, selfishness, narcissism and self-sabotage could be overlooked, now our focus is community and as a family it surpasses them all. For this reason, in verses 22-23 Yeshua reminds of our true calling as one community reminding,

*“The glory that You have given to Me I have given to them, that they may be one just as We are one— I in them and You in Me—that they may be **perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me and loved them as You loved Me.**”*
(emphasis mine)



Love and life-long covenant relationships are therefore, both the hallmark of our Messiah faith, and the context from which love is expressed from God, and reflective in the body life of a local congregation, as governed under the pastoral care of a local body of Elders. For myself, this sense of unity was most powerfully demonstrated years ago when I served as Rabbi at Rosh Pina Messianic Congregation in Owings Mills, MD. During our time there, my wife and I lived in Pikesville, a vibrant Orthodox Jewish community. From my observance of watching the traditional Jewish community live out their emunah (faith), I saw how clearly we followers of Yeshua must all the more live. For my Orthodox neighbors the question of on a whim leaving unheard of. There would never be an answer to the hypothetical question's "do you like your congregation or rabbi, or would you ever see yourself elsewhere" would never come into play, nor would there be temptation of "congregational hopping" on a whim come into play, but the life of faithfulness is alone expressed in a life of authentic, lasting community.

Where Mick Jones identified in his 1982 song concerning our duplicity, we are reminded anew that the only reason to go to a congregation is because God is leading us there. However, such a choice is never merely a "decision" of the individual, but instead should be seen in the context of blessing, where the person is received into a community, and in reverse, the only reason to ever leave is both a result of the leading of the Spirit, and also the

blessing of the local body of Elders where the person leaving is loved, blessed and sent out in blessing. Now if the congregation is either toxic and destructive, or if there is open, unrepentant sin among the leadership, then, there can be exceptions, but all others must be acted on alone in the context of covenant. Yet isn't it true that is almost never done

Sadly, in most cases a person out of nowhere will at best say, "... God is leading me elsewhere and my season here is over," or at worse, just disappear and sever relationships and thus damage many! Also, many approach the community as a 'dream' or misconception, where they cherry-pick what they like, but reject through attrition the commands our flesh likes the least. When such a false narrative wins, there is never a possibility for a Matthew 19 process, nor relationships healed because the individual has abandoned the community. As long as this exists, how can we ever claim that we are fulfilling Messiah's mandate in John 17 to be echad (one) even as Yeshua, and the Father are one? Instead, may we model our lives in community and covenantal responsibility, for as Deitrich Bonhoeffer reminds in Life Together,

"The person who loves their dream of community will destroy community, but the person who loves those around them will create community."





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Our calling to biblical unity
and accountability is
received by God as worship,
offering a fragrant aroma
before the throne room of
God.

MARK RANTZ



Our Congregations



Arizona

BETH MAYIM CHAYIM
bethmayimchayim.org

YESHUA HA'MASHIACH
yeshua-hamashiach.org

BETH EMANUEL
bethemanuelaz.org

California

BETH DAVID
bethdavidmc.org

BETH SHALOM
bethshalomcorona.com

Colorado

OR CHAIM
or-chaim.com

Florida

BEIT HALLEL
beithallelocala.org

ELIM CONGREGATION
ElimMessianicCongregation.org

BETH YESHUA, HOUSE OF
THE RISEN SON
bethyshua.us

Illinois

NEW JERUSALEM HOUSE OF
PRAYER
newjerusalem.net

Kansas

KINGDOM LIVING
kingdomlivingkc.org

REMNANT OF ISRAEL
shalomwichita.com

Maryland

EL SHADDAI
escfrederick.com

ROSH PINA
roshpina.life

New York

ADAT CHAIM
adatchaim.net

BETH AM MESSIAH
bethammessiah.org

Pennsylvania

BEIT SIMCHA
beitsimcha.com

SHORESH DAVID
shoreshdavid.com

Tennessee

B'RIT HADASHA
brithadasha.org

SHOMAIR YISRAEL
syknox.org

Virginia

OHEV YISRAEL
ohevysrael.org

TIKVAT ISRAEL
tikvatisrael.com

Washington DC

AHAVAT YESHUA
ahavat.org

Wisconsin

BETH MESSIAH
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SHALOM RESTORATION
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shalomrestorationfellowship.ca

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