

לב לדעת ועינים לראות ואזנים לשמע עד היום הזה
A Heart to Know, Eyes to See, and Ears to Hear, unto this day
Parashat Ki Tavo

In this weeks Parashat, Moshe instructs the people of Israel: “When you enter the land that G-d is giving to you as your eternal heritage, and you settle it and cultivate it, bring the first-ripened fruits (bikkurim) of your orchard to the Holy Temple, and declare your gratitude for all that G-d has done for you.” Our Parashat also includes the laws of the tithes given to the Levites and to the poor. Moshe concludes the Parashat by telling our forefathers (our Jewish people) that only today, forty years after their birth as a people, have they attained *a heart to know, eyes to see, and ears to hear*.

Repentance = Remember + Review + Return

T'Shuvah the Hebrew word that means “to answer or return or repent” describes the period of 40 days, from the 1st of *Elul* (the 6th Hebrew month, August 14, 2007) to the 10th of *Tishrei* (the 7th Hebrew month, September 22, 2007). In Leviticus 23:24 the L-RD commanded Moshe to observe the first day of the seventh month, *Tishri*, as a *Yom Teruah* (a Day of the Blowing of the *Shofar*) also known as *Rosh Hashanah*, the first day of the Hebrew civil year. This day is also known as the *Feast of Trumpets* (the Hebrew word translated as trumpets in Lev. 23:24 in the Authorized Version is *Shofar*). This day begins a final ten-day period beginning on *Yom Teruah* and culminating on the 10th of *Tishrei*, on the *Feast of Atonement (Yom Kippur)*. These ten days are known as the High Holy Days and the Days of Awe (*Yamim Nora'im*, literally, the days of awe). The shabbat that falls within this ten-day period is called *Shabbat T'Shuvah*, the Sabbath of Return. Five days after *Yom Kippur* is *Sukkot*, the *Feast of Tabernacles*. Each morning during the 29/30 days of *Elul*, the *shofar* or ram's horn is blown to warn the people to repent and return to G-d.

T'Shuvah speaks to all people. Messianic believers are called to examine their lives and see where they have departed from G-d. It is a call to examine the Scriptures and the evidence that Messiah *Y'shua* was who He said He was. Is Messiah *Y'shua* king of your life and your heart yet? G-d has always had a heart to warn people before He proclaims judgment. He warned the people before the flood, and Nineveh before it was ruined. He does not want anyone to receive the wrath of His judgment.

Rosh HaShanah is identified with many idioms and phrases that help us describe the days in the season of Repentance and speak of their purpose. The message from *Elul* 1 until *Tishri* 1 is clear: “Repent before *Rosh HaShanah* or you will find yourself in the days of awe unprepared.” In Jewish tradition, everyone tries to settle matters with their friends and family and fulfill their duty to their community by asking for forgiveness from one another before *Rosh HaShanah*. Shouldn't we in the body of Messiah do at least as much?

Remember in terms of repentance means to bring back into our minds the fact that everything that we are and that we hope is because of our Savior, Messiah *Yeshua*. Without Him we were hopelessly lost and had nothing to look forward to. Scripture reminds us: “¹¹Therefore, remember your former state: you Gentiles by birth - called the Uncircumcised by those who, merely because of an operation on their flesh, are called the Circumcised - ¹²at that time had no Messiah. You were estranged from the national life of Isra'el. You were foreigners to the covenants embodying God's promise. You were in this world without hope and without God. ¹³But now, you who were once far off have been brought near through the shedding of the Messiah's blood. ¹⁴For he himself is our shalom - he has made us both one and has broken down the *m'chitzah* which divided us ¹⁵by destroying in his own body the enmity occasioned by the Torah, with its commands set forth in the form of ordinances. He did this in order to create in union with himself from the two groups a single new humanity (one new man) and thus make shalom.” (Eph. 2:11-15) What a

great thing to remember! We are His family, His brothers, His people. ¹⁶“and in order to reconcile to God both in a single body by being executed on a stake as a criminal and thus killing in himself that enmity. ¹⁷Also, when he came, he announced as Good News shalom to you far off and shalom to those nearby, ¹⁸news that through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then, you are no longer foreigners and strangers. On the contrary, you are fellow-citizens with God's people and members of God's family.” (Eph. 2:16-19)

Revival in terms of repentance means to re-examine, re-analyze, re-study, reconsider, retrospect, critique, inspect, and to thoroughly reinvestigate WHAT He has done for us. In this the month of *T'Shuvah* we want to continue making progress toward *shalom* with G-d and with man (cf. Romans 5:1 “So, since we have come to be considered righteous by God because of our trust, let us continue to have shalom with God through our Lord, Yeshua the Messiah.”).

What, if anything, can stop the blessing of G-d in our lives? Is the working of the Father through His Messiah *Yeshua* subject to any deterrents? Consider these Scriptures to help us decide for ourselves on the answer.

⁵³When Yeshua had finished these parables, he left ⁵⁴and went to his home town. There he taught them in their synagogue in a way that astounded them, so that they asked, “Where do this man's wisdom and miracles come from? ⁵⁵Isn't he the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother called Miryam? and his brothers Ya'akov, Yosef, Shim'on and Y'hudah? ⁵⁶And his sisters, aren't they all with us? So where does he get all this?” ⁵⁷And they took offense at him. But Yeshua said to them, “The only place people don't respect a prophet is in his home town and in his own house.” ⁵⁸And he did few miracles there because of their lack of trust (unbelief, KJV).” (Matt. 13:53-58)

He said to them, “Because you have such little trust (unbelief, KJV)! Yes! I tell you that if you have trust as tiny as a mustard seed, you will be able to say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there!’ and it will move; indeed, nothing will be impossible for you! (Matt. 17:20)

¹Then Yeshua left and went to his home town, and his talmidim followed him. ²On Shabbat he started to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They asked, “Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom he has been given? What are these miracles worked through him? ³Isn't he just the carpenter? the son of Miryam? the brother of Ya'akov and Yosi and Y'hudah and Shim'on? Aren't his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him. ⁴But Yeshua said to them. “The only place people don't respect a prophet is in his home town, among his own relatives, and in his own house.” ⁵So he could do no miracles there, other than lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. ⁶He was amazed at their lack of trust (unbelief, KJV).” (Mark 6:1-6)

²³Yeshua said to him, “What do you mean, ‘if you can’? Everything is possible to someone who has trust!” ²⁴Instantly the father of the child exclaimed, “I do trust - help my lack of trust! (unbelief, KJV)” (Mark 9:23-24)

Later, Yeshua appeared to the Eleven as they were eating, and he reproached them for their lack of trust (unbelief, KJV) and their spiritual insensitivity in not having believed those who had seen him after he had risen. (Mark 16:14)

²⁰He did not by lack of trust (unbelief, KJV) decide against God's promises. On the contrary, by trust he was given power as he gave glory to God, ²¹for he was fully convinced that what God had promised he could also accomplish. ²²This is why it was credited to his account as righteousness. ²³But the words, “it was credited to his account...,” were not written for him only. ²⁴They were written also for us, who will certainly have our account credited too, because we have trusted in him who raised Yeshua our Lord from the dead. (Romans 4:20-24)

¹⁷But if some of the branches were broken off, and you - a wild olive - were grafted in among them and have become equal sharers in the rich root of the olive tree, ¹⁸then don't boast as if you were better than the branches! However, if

you do boast, remember that you are not supporting the root, the root is supporting you. ¹⁹So you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." ²⁰True, but so what? They were broken off because of their lack of trust (unbelief, KJV). However, you keep your place only because of your trust. So don't be arrogant; on the contrary, be terrified! ²¹For if God did not spare the natural branches, he certainly won't spare you! ²²So take a good look at God's kindness and his severity: on the one hand, severity toward those who fell off; but, on the other hand, God's kindness toward you - provided you maintain yourself in that kindness! Otherwise, you too will be cut off! ²³Moreover, the others, if they do not persist in their lack of trust (unbelief, KJV), will be grafted in; because God is able to graft them back in. ²⁴For if you were cut out of what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree! ²⁵For, brothers, I want you to understand this truth which God formerly concealed but has now revealed, so that you won't imagine you know more than you actually do. It is that stoniness, to a degree, has come upon Isra'el, until the Gentile world enters in its fullness; ²⁶and that it is in this way that all Isra'el will be saved. As the Tanakh says, "Out of Tziyon will come the Redeemer; he will turn away ungodliness from Ya'akov ²⁷and this will be my covenant with them, ... when I take away their sins." ²⁸With respect to the Good News they are hated for your sake. But with respect to being chosen they are loved for the Patriarchs' sake, ²⁹for God's free gifts and his calling are irrevocable. ³⁰Just as you yourselves were disobedient to God before but have received mercy now because of Isra'el's disobedience (unbelief, KJV); ³¹so also Isra'el has been disobedient now, so that by your showing them the same mercy that God has shown you, they too may now receive God's mercy. ³²For God has shut up all mankind together in disobedience (unbelief, KJV), in order that he might show mercy to all. (Romans 11:17-32)

¹²Watch out, brothers, so that there will not be in any one of you an evil heart lacking trust (unbelief, KJV), which could lead you to apostatize from the living God!... ¹⁹So we see that they were unable to enter because of lack of trust (unbelief, KJV). (Hebrews 3:12, 19)

⁶Therefore, since it still remains for some to enter it, and those who received the Good News earlier did not enter, because of unbelief (KJV)... ¹¹Therefore, let us do our best to enter that rest; so that no one will fall short because of the same kind of disobedience. (Hebrews 4:6, 11)

Unbelief stops the L-rd's blessings! Unbelief prevents miracles. Unbelief stops our ministry against principalities and powers. Unbelief keeps us in the "being weighed in the balance and found wanting." (Dan. 5:27). "...he could do no miracles there, other than lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them." (Mark 6:5) Unbelief causes *Yeshua* to want to rebuke us. Unbelief would have stopped Abraham from reaching the Father's goals for him. Unbelief is keeping our people from being grafted into their own Olive tree. Unbelief causes God to shut up all mankind. Unbelief leads to apostasy. Unbelief keeps us from entering our Shabbat rest and fall short of the mark. I agree with the father of the child in Mark 9:24 "L-rd, help thou my unbelief!"

A Time to Review

So here we are, approaching *Yom Teruah*, and what shall we do as we prepare for His High Holy Days? We should stop our falling short of the mark—it is time to start trusting the L-rd, His Ruach and His Messiah *Yeshua*. This is at the very core of obedience. This is part of moving forward as a congregation and "possessing the land." No wonder Scripture says that "without trusting, it is impossible to be well pleasing to God, because whoever approaches him must trust that he does exist and that he becomes a Rewarder to those who seek him out." Many of you are operating in various degrees of unbelief—it is time to stop it! By His Ruach, He will help our unbelief.

Let us today have ears to *Sh'ma*. Let us **R**eturn to *Adonai* and complete our *t'shuvah*. Let us pray...