

A Heart to Understand, Eyes to See, or Ears to Hear

In this week's *Parashat*, Moshe instructs our Jewish people this way: ¹"When you have come to the land *יהוה* your Elohim is giving you as your inheritance, taken possession of it and settled there; ²you are to take the firstfruits of all the crops the ground yields, which you will harvest from your land that *יהוה* your Elohim is giving you, put them in a basket and go to the place where *יהוה* your Elohim will choose to have his name live. ³You will approach the Cohen holding office at the time and say to him, 'Today I declare to *יהוה* your Elohim that I have come to the land *יהוה* your Elohim swore to our ancestors that he would give us.' ⁴The Cohen will take the basket from your hand and put it down in front of the altar of *יהוה* your Elohim" (Deut. 26:1-4). This speaks of the first of the fruits but this is **not** the tithe (the word tithe comes from the Hebrew word which means literally a tenth) of our efforts (our harvest). This indicates that whatever comes first from our field of effort (which also includes our crops) we should bring it to the Lord. The Hebrew word used in Deut. 29:2 is *raysheet*, not *ma'aser*. We have specific instructions about the tithe (*ma'aser*) such as in Mal. 3:8-10: ⁸"Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, How have we robbed You? In tithes and offerings.' ⁹'You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you!' ¹⁰'Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,' says *יהוה* *Tzeva'ot*, 'if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.'" But here we have instructions about what to do when we experience blessing, when we harvest from the inheritance that we know the Lord is giving to us. This speaks of generosity, and it speaks of an attitude of giving back to the Lord as a form of worship. All giving is worship, but that which we bring to the House of God, that which we offer to Him in the *Tzedakah* box, is what He asked for in Deut. 26:1-4.

We also note that this week's *Parashah* also includes all the blessings and all the curses of Deuteronomy 28. I believe nearly everyone in here is familiar with the list so I will not comment further. However, just before the *maftir* of *Parashat Ki Tavo* Moshe reminds them (us) that: *"Nevertheless, to this day יהוה has not given you a heart to understand, eyes to see or ears to hear!"* (Deut. 29:4).

I believe that we desperately need a soft heart instead of a hard heart. We need a heart that is able to hear with compassion and with humility, that sees the benefits of living through Him, for Him, and in Him and equips the person with the resolve to obey all the things the Lord wants for us. A heart that does not understand this way results in an individual that is not wise because wisdom is viewing life from God's perspective. *"In Him we live and move and have our being"* (Acts 17:28) and are able to operate in a supernatural dimension. In Him, as we were taught last week, we are able to speak unto the mountain called sickness: *"be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea"* (Matt. 21:21, Mk 11:23) If the Lord has not given you (us) this kind of heart, eyes and ears, then it is time to ask! Yes, it is time to ask. Today is the day to ask the Lord to give us, by His Spirit, a heart (and a soul, which is our mind, will, and emotions) that is ready, willing and able to respond to Him this way. If as a congregation we want to soar (mount up with wings as eagles) to the next level, we must have that kind of heart. What keeps us from having that type of heart? Sin, of course.

Leaders often understand that their flock needs to go through the washing of repentance. This is why many schedule times of revival and bring in guests to motivate them to do so. Others in the Body of Messiah never seem to go those kinds of services. But we in Messianic Judaism have scheduled times where the Lord has already written in His Books that He is attentive to hearing from His people. Did you know that we are in the last half of that time? Today is the Eighteen Day of *Elul* (the sixth month) and we have exactly eleven days before the seventh month, the month of *Tishri* arrives? In Messianic Judaism we are not allowed to wait much longer to obtain Repentance and be in a position to ask the Lord for *"A Heart to Understand, Eyes to See, and Ears to Hear."*

This week the Holy Spirit inside of me has been singing a song from Psalm 19, *"Los cielos cuentan la Gloria de Dios..."* (sing this song in Spanish). The songs lyrics are precisely the first four verses of the Psalm:

“¹The heavens are telling of the glory of God (declaring His glory); and their expanse (the firmament) is declaring the work of His hands. ²Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. ³There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard. ⁴Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the world.” You see the sun and the moon are declaring that it is time for repentance. Have you noticed? The moon is getting brighter, and autumn is in the air. Rehearsals are about to begin (explain briefly that all the Feasts of the Lord (*moadim*) are rehearsals.) I believe that being aware of these celestial utterances is of great value and I truly feel that this is one of the blessings of being part of the Messianic Movement, don’t you? People in the Body of Messiah are not listening, the moon, the sun and the firmament is speaking loudly, but few are paying attention. Do you hear their voice? Listen! 🎵 *I hear a sound coming from the mountain, it’s getting loud every day...* 🎵 {play *I Hear A Sound*, from the Up to Zion CD by Paul Wilbur}

The season of Repentance (repentance in Hebrew is the word *T’Shuvah*, literally to turn around, to give an answer or to return) runs forty days from the first of the sixth month (*Elul*) to the tenth of the seventh month (*Tishri*), that is, *Yom Kippur*. During the month of *Elul* the *shofar* is sounded and special prayers are made daily in synagogues around the world expecting us Jews to turn around and return to *יְהוָה* and be restored into fellowship with God. The last ten days of this forty-day period (beginning on *Yom Teruah* (which is the first day of *Tishri*) and ending on *Yom Kippur* (which takes place on the tenth of *Tishri*)) are referred to as the “*High Holy Days*” or the “*Days of Awe*” (*Yamim Nora'im*). During this season of Repentance (*T’Shuvah*) we Jews evaluate (introspectively) our lives and, hopefully, we all come to realization that we in desperate need of forgiveness so we can return!

T’Shuvah speaks to all people. Messianic believers are called to examine their lives and see where they have departed from G-d. For us it is a call to carefully examine the Scriptures and weigh the evidence that Messiah *Y’shua* was who He said He was. Is Messiah *Y’shua* king of your life and your heart yet? God 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, so in this time He also warns us.

We need an awakening from the sleep induced by sin so the power of the Holy Spirit is allowed to work in the heart of the believer who trusts in G-d’s salvation through *Yeshua and who asks*. *T’Shuvah* is a gift from the L-rd. Do you want it? Many of you (us) are operating in various degrees of unbelief – it is time to stop it! By His *Ruach* we rebuke our unbelief. Let us pray... {Play again *I Hear A Sound*, from the Up to Zion CD by Paul Wilbur}