



Parasha Ki Tavo

September 5, 2020

Torah: Deuteronomy 26:1-29:8
Haftarah: Isaiah 60:1-22
K'tuvim Shlichim: Romans 11:1-15

Our *parasha* this week is *Ki Tavo*, “when you come in,” referring to the Land. Today, we are just over halfway through the month of *Elul* at day 16. We are preparing ourselves for the High Holy Days which begin with *Rosh Hashanah* on September 19th, just two weeks from today. I hope you’ve used the *Elul* devotional guide to assist you in your daily worship. *Elul* 5780 could be the most important month of *Elul* ever. It very well seems to be for our nation. We are facing the possibility of the end of society as we have known it. The battle is in the heavenlies. We are battling Principalities and Powers, wicked spirits in high places, which are on a mission to defeat the followers of Yeshua. We cannot let that happen.

In Jewish tradition, *Elul* is about us, a time to seek personal righteousness. But, as Messianic followers of Yeshua, each of us has been already given the hope of eternity and at the same time called to be a *tzadik*, a righteous person, a person righteous in Yeshua’s eyes. During this time, we are examining ourselves to see where we have fallen short and to make *teshuvah*, to repent of what we find.

What we are seeing in ourselves falls generally into two categories, our relationship with ADONAI and Yeshua and our relationships with our fellow man. *Avraham avinu*, our father Abraham, dealt with life on both those planes and as his children our goal is to have that Abrahamic kind of faith and righteousness. His relationship with ADONAI was so exemplary that he has become the model of not only faith for us, but also of faithfulness. We understand that we must be in right relationship with the Father through Yeshua and that area of our faith seems to be the one in which we focus most. It is the most important. Yeshua has told us that the most important *mitzvah*, the most important command, is to love ADONAI with all our heart, mind and strength.

The month of *Elul* gives us an opportunity to look more closely at our relationship with Yeshua and what it should be. Traditional Judaism teaches us love for the Father by relating the month of *Elul* to *The Song of Solomon*. In Hebrew it is *Shir HaShirim*, “Song of Songs.” Traditionally read at Passover, Judaism correctly tells us that at Passover our romance with G-d began. Traditional Jews are very close to the truth and one day soon all Israel will understand that it was their romance with Yeshua which began at Passover. Judaism speaks of *Shir HaShirim* as an allegory of the love affair between G-d and His people. We as Messianic followers of Yeshua understand this allegory as the love affair between us and our Messiah.

This love is pictured in the acronym for the month of “*Elul*,” the first letters of the first four words in Song of Songs 6:3 in Hebrew. The letters “*alef, lamed, vav, lamed*” stand for “*ani l’dodi v’dodi li* (אני לדודי ודודי לי), in English, “I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine.” The Tree of Life Bible puts verses 1-3 this way. In verse 1 someone asks: *1Where has your lover gone, most beautiful among women? Where has your lover turned, so we may seek him with you?* In verses 2 and 3 the female responds: *2My lover went down to his garden, to the*

beds of balsam to graze his flocks in the gardens and to gather lilies. I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine. He browses among the lilies. Collectively and individually, we are the bride of Messiah and are the female speaking. Yeshua is the bridegroom, the male to whom we are expressing our love, the mature and devoted love between a husband and wife. That is because we love Him “with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength” (Mark 12:30). That is our goal. We’re not all there yet, but this month gives us an opportunity to work on our relationship.

Traditionally we speak of the month of *Elul* as a time of repentance in preparation for renewing our relationship with our Messiah. And it is. But it is also a time for us to understand the intimate relationship which we are called to have with Yeshua. John chapter 21 describes the type of love relationship that we are to have with Him. Following His resurrection but before His ascension, *Shimon Kefa* (Peter) and six others of Yeshua’s disciples were fishing in the Sea of Galilee. They fished all night but didn’t catch anything. As dawn was breaking they saw a man standing on the shore. It was Yeshua but they didn’t recognize Him. He asked if they had any fish and was told no. He told them to throw their net on the right side of their boat and they would catch some. They did and there were so many fish in it that they couldn’t haul it in. *Yochanan* (John) recognized Yeshua. When *Kefa* heard him say that it was the Messiah, he swam to shore and the others followed in the boat. When they got ashore, they saw a fire of coals with a fish cooking on it and some bread. Yeshua told them to bring some of the fish they had just caught and then to come and have breakfast. They all knew that it was Yeshua but were afraid to ask Him.

After breakfast Yeshua asked *Shimon Kefa* this question: “*Shim’on Bar-Yochanan* (Simon, son of John), do you love me more than these?” Yeshua used the word *agape* to ask Peter if he loved Him. *Agape* love is the highest and most spiritual kind of love and is the love of the *Shema*; “with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength.” If *Kefa* had *agape* love for Yeshua it would have been a love above all things and all people including himself. But *Kefa* didn’t respond that way. He said that he had *phileo* love, brotherly love for Yeshua, characterized by liking, affection and fondness. “Yes, L-rd, You know I *phileo* You.” *Phileo* love is not a bad thing, but it was not what Yeshua was looking for. He asked Peter a second time, “do you *agapao* me” and again Peter responded: “L-rd, You know I *phileo* You;” “I’m Your friend; I have brotherly love for You” was what Peter was saying. Yeshua asked a third time and this time He used *phileo*. What Yeshua seemed to be saying was “*Kefa*, are you just my friend?” Peter was a little hurt by this and responded, “yes L-rd, I *phileo* You; You are my friend.” He still didn’t understand. After all that Peter had been through with Yeshua, he still didn’t understand. After rejecting Him three times and the great remorse that followed, then seeing Yeshua crucified and afterward seeing His resurrection body with the crucifixion wounds, Peter still not understand the relationship which Yeshua was seeking? He was there and witnessed it all. How would we answer Yeshua if He asked us that today? Wasn’t He seeking a different answer from *Kefa*? Consider the possibility that this interchange between Yeshua and *Kefa* is an allegory, and that *Shimon Kefa* is a picture of the “Bride of Messiah” being questioned by Yeshua. He is asking each of us the same questions which He asked Peter, “do you *agapeo* Me.” If we’re not quite at the *agape* level, it is still attainable. Our walk with Yeshua is not a short walk, but a journey. What Song of Songs 6:3 really says for us is: “I am Yeshua’s and Yeshua is mine.” This is the relationship, a relationship like a relationship of committed marital love, which Yeshua wishes us to have with Him.

Yeshua also told us that the second most important command is to love our neighbor as ourselves. If we examine His teachings closely, we find that most of it is about dealing with our neighbor. And the major source of our righteousness, according to most of the teachings which Yeshua has given us in His Word, is derived in our relationships with our fellow man. It's horizontal love. We are first called to love ADONAI our G-d with all our heart, mind and strength, a vertical relationship. As Yeshua said, that is the most important commandment, a love which is also directed toward Yeshua. We readily understand this vertical kind of love. But, most of Yeshua's teaching for us is directed toward horizontal relationships, toward our fellow man, our neighbor. And, we have been commanded to love him or her with a love equal to that which we have for ourselves. And when we carry out this horizontal love in the way that Yeshua taught us we are also strengthening our vertical relationship with Yeshua and the Father.

But, it's much more difficult to love our fellow man than it is to love ADONAI. Maybe that's why Yeshua devoted more time to that subject. People are not always nice, and our own nature has a hard time responding to someone who is not nice to us. But, much of Yeshua's teaching has to do with loving them, even though many times they are not nice to us or even may wish to kill us. We are not told to love them "if" they are nice to us. The fully committed follower of Yeshua knows that we must love them regardless. Yeshua said: *44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Even the tax collectors do the same, don't they? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than anyone else? Even the pagans do that, don't they? 48 Therefore be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect*" (Matthew 5:44-47 TLV). It's not easy to love those who curse us. It's not even easy to love those who just shake their fist at us for some minor thing they perceive we have done to them. But we have been commanded to be perfect in our love. Yeshua didn't say "do your best to love them." He said "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." This is a major theme of the month of *Elul*; how to live with our fellow man with a G-d-like love. If we're not in a righteous relationship with our fellow man, our neighbor, we're more than likely not in a right relationship with our Father. Each of us must examine our heart to see if we're really where we think we are with regard to both G-d and our fellow man.

Are we *tzadikim*, righteous ones, in the sense that Yeshua taught? We are called to be righteous. During this season of *Elul*, should we be asking ourselves if we are righteous? Is this a question which we should be asking ourselves during this time? Are we loving our fellow man with a G-d-like *chesed* love? There is no judgment here, just an opportunity for each of us to take a closer look at our lives. *Chesed* means love but is usually expressed as "loving kindness." *Chesed* is what Abraham displayed when ADONAI and two of His angels appeared at his tent. *Chesed* is what the writer of Hebrews was teaching us about when he spoke about that very same encounter which Abraham had with ADONAI: *1 Let brotherly love continue. 2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers—for in doing so, some have entertained angels without knowing it* (Hebrews 13:2 TLV). The very real possibility remains that ADONAI does that today and we have had encounters with angels.

Chesed speaks of a fundamental of Judaism called *Gemilut chasadim*, the loving care for others. In traditional Jewish literature, *chesed* is one of the primary virtues. *Rabbi Sh'mon the Just*, who lived in the third century, taught that: "The world rests upon three things: *Torah*, service to God, and bestowing kindness, that is, *chesed*" (*Pirkei Avot 1:2*).

We might not necessarily place them in that order, but we do agree that *chesed* is a core ethical virtue. *Rabbi Simlai* claims in the *Talmud* that "The *Torah* begins with *chesed* and ends with *chesed*." Another way to say it is that "the entire *Torah* is characterized by *chesed*, that is, *Torah* teaches us that our lives are to be totally characterized by mercy and compassion." *Gemilut chasidim*, loving care for our neighbor is another focus during *Elul*, one that we should examine in our lives.

Those of you who have regularly heard my messages know I speak about the end times and Yeshua's return quite frequently. We are called to be excited about it and to pray for it. As Yeshua told us, we are to pray "*Your kingdom come*" (Matthew 6:10a TLV). At this time in history because of the signs of the times, we are becoming more and more excited and looking forward to Yeshua's return. But, the orthodox and ultra-orthodox are also excited. We have seen in the last few months, a number of prophecies, maybe four, from their rabbis about the *Mashiach* coming this upcoming Hebrew year, 5781. This generation has seen more fulfilled prophecies pointing toward Yeshua's return than any other generation. We don't know exactly when it will be, but according to the signs of the times and the prophecies which have been fulfilled, our hearts tell us that we are in the period which the rabbis call *hatchalat haGeulah*, "the beginning of the redemption." In Jewish understanding, *geulah*, redemption, is the coming of *Mashiach*. And, a major orthodox prayer right now is for *HaGeulah*, Messiah's coming.

Even seventy-two years ago at the establishment of Israel, we couldn't see it. But now, how close are we? Are we in the time of the end? We have watched the Book of Daniel for a sign. In chapter 12, the angel who had been assisting Michael in battle with the demonic Prince of Persia said to Daniel: 4 "*But you, Daniel, close up the words and seal the book until the time of the end*" (Daniel 12:4a TLV). Would you agree that if the book has been unsealed that we are in the time of the end? Read Dan Bruce's explanation in his book, *Daniel Unsealed* and see if you agree that the mystery sealed by ADONAI in Daniel 12 has now been unsealed.

There are several questions to which we are seeking answers. Dan Bruce had to solve them in order. First he solved the mystery of these verses: 13 "*Then I heard a holy one speaking and another holy one said to the one who was speaking, 'How long will the vision last, the daily sacrifice be forsaken because of rebellion, the sanctuary be surrendered and the host be trampled?'* 14 *Then he said to me: 'For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be vindicated'*" (Daniel 8:13-14 TLV). I encourage you to read it for yourselves, but I'll break it down for you today. We have to go back to chapter 8 for the first unlocking. In counting the days and years in these prophecies, ADONAI gave them to Daniel as holy events, symbolic of what He was doing. Bruce unlocked the key for this prophecy. Here, evenings and mornings referred to Passovers. I encourage you to read for yourself how he determined it. But, the 2,300 evenings and mornings were a count of Passovers which began at the Battle of Granicus in 334 BCE. In this battle, Alexander the Great defeated the much superior forces of Darius III, the King of Persia. The 2300 Passovers began in 334 and ended in 1967 when Israeli forces recaptured Jerusalem. That is when the sanctuary was vindicated and no longer trampled. In this, Bruce determined that 1967 was the beginning of the "time of the end." That understanding was the unsealing of the Book of Daniel. That was the first step and we need to know it in order to understand the prophecy of chapter 12. The Book of Daniel was sealed up until the time of the end, July 7, 1967, the time of the recapture of Jerusalem. Yeshua also referred to this time. As we read two weeks ago, He said: 24... *Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are*

fulfilled” (Luke 21:24b TLV). The times of the Gentiles have been fulfilled, the Book of Daniel is unsealed and the time of the end is identified.

In chapter 12 we see the same angel speaking to Daniel: 7 *“Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised both his right and left hands toward heaven and swore an oath by Him who lives forever, saying, “It is for a time, times, and a half. Then when the breaking of the power of the holy people comes to an end, all these things will be finished”* (Daniel 12:7 TLV). What is a time, times and half and how does it apply to the time of the end? Daniel didn’t understand. 8 *“Now I heard, but I did not understand. So I said, ‘My Lord, what will be the outcome of these things?’* 9 *Then he said: “Go your way, Daniel. For the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. 10 Many will be purified, made spotless and refined (isn’t he talking about us, Yeshua followers?), but the wicked will act wickedly. None of the wicked will understand, but the wise will understand. 11 “From the time that the daily burnt offering is taken away, and abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. 12 Happy is the one who keeps waiting, and reaches the 1,335 days”* (Daniel 12:8-12 TLV). Now that we know that verse 9 has been fulfilled, we can understand the prophecy of the days.

With regard to Daniel’s question *‘My Lord, what will be the outcome of these things?’*, Bruce identified “these things” as what happened in the preceding chapter, chapter 11: 31 *“His forces will rise up and profane the fortified Temple; they will stop the daily offering and set up the abomination of desolation”* (Daniel 11:31 TLV). The individual spoken of here was Antiochus IV, the Syrian ruler whose forces desecrated the Temple in the time of the Maccabees. We discussed this, the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, two weeks ago. Yeshua spoke of it as He sat on the Mount of Olives. The abomination of desolation occurred in the year 167 BCE when Antiochus desecrated the Temple and set up the abomination. As we saw a moment ago, the evenings and mornings in chapter 8 which led us to 1967, the beginning of the end times, referred to Passovers. Here in chapter 12, Bruce reasoned that days referred to Days of Atonement. The 1335 days of atonement was the total time, but broken into two periods, 1290 days plus another 45 days of atonement. Now knowing 1967 as the time of the end, Bruce counted backward 45 days of atonement, actually years, from the time of the end in 1967 and arrived at 1922. There he found that on July 4th of that year, the League of Nations approved the Palestine Mandate. It was an agreement by the nations that Britain should control Palestine. This agreement also incorporated the British Balfour Declaration of 1917 which provided for a Jewish national home. Coming from the other way, 167 BCE and the abomination of desolation, we are led to the 1290 days. Daniel was told: *12 Happy is the one who keeps waiting, and reaches the 1,335 days”* (Daniel 12:12 TLV). 1290 days was good, but the real goal was the recapture of Jerusalem and the beginning of the time of the end. And, we are happy that we were here to have seen it. Incidentally, but not accidentally, it was also the time of the beginning of Messianic Judaism.

The purpose of first understanding the time of the end is to understand what Daniel was told at the beginning of this chapter. 1 *“At that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has never occurred since the (re-beginning) beginning of the nation until then. But at that time your people—everyone who is found written in the book—will be delivered. 2 Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake—some to everlasting life, and others to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavenly expanse. And those who turn many to righteousness will be like the stars forever and ever. 4*

*But you, Daniel, close up the words and seal the book until the time of the end. Many will run back and forth and knowledge will increase” (Daniel 12:1-4 TLV). That is what is happening during the time of end, even right now. And, we are now more than 53 years past 1967, 53 years into that generation. This is what Yeshua spoke of on the Mount of Olives and which we read two weeks ago, “the trouble of those days.” 29 “But immediately after the trouble of those days, *the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light and the stars will fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens will be shaken*” (Matthew 24:29 TLV). The two periods are the same, the one spoken of in Daniel 12 and the one spoken of by Yeshua in Matthew 24. We are now in latter part of the end of days. According to Yeshua, Heaven and earth will pass away (Isaiah 65:17; 66:22), but during this time, we who have trusted in Yeshua will not even smell of smoke. We will already have received our resurrection bodies along with “all Israel.” We are not to fear, but to trust.*

Rabbi Jonathan Cahn’s book, *The Harbinger II*, is very timely. It was released this past Tuesday, September 1st. I received my Kindle copy then and had finished reading it by the next afternoon. It reveals where we as a nation are spiritually and calls us to repentance. It seems to have been intentionally released when it was, right before today’s *parasha*, *Ki Tavo*, because *Ki Tavo* is found within it. I won’t tell you any more than that, except to say that every follower of Yeshua must get it and read it immediately. It reveals the urgency of these days.

The Scriptures tell us where we are with regard to Yeshua’s return and what we see in our nation and the world today confirm that is where we are. We are in the “trouble of those days” which Yeshua spoke of. I believe that we have 59 days left to make a positive change in our nation. This period ends on November 3rd, election day. It is urgent that we continue to pray and to encourage everyone to pray. Our battle is in the heavenlies, against *HaSatan* and his principalities and powers. We must also remember that those that *HaSatan* is using are not our enemies. Yeshua said: 44 “*But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,..*” (Matthew 5:44a TLV). Prayer is the spiritual weapon of war required for us to win this battle, the most serious battle any of us have ever been in. A lukewarm body of Messiah must awaken. If *HaSatan* wins this election, we will still be here trusting in Yeshua and awaiting Yeshua and our redemption to come. But, how much better for us to be here, a nation which has turned back to ADONAI victorious over the powers of sin and darkness? Did the *hatchalat haGeulah*, “the beginning of the redemption,” described by rabbis begin in 1967? I believe that it did. They have another term describing Him as much closer, *ikvot meshicha*, “the heels of *Mashiach*.” It is even closer to Messiah’s return and is described as the time immediately before He comes. May it be soon! But, even before Yeshua comes, we have the hope that the time for the redemption of all Israel is near. ADONAI has promised and will keep His word. 26“*and in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, “The Deliverer shall come out of Zion. He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. 27 And this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins” (Romans 11:26-27 TLV). As Sha’ul said, 15 “For if their rejection leads to the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead” (Romans 11:15 TLV)?*

I am not being melodramatic. This is real. We are facing the possibility that life as we know it could change. And, it will, unless Yeshua’s body awakens from its slumber. Today, I’m going to do something that I’ve never done before, sound the *shofar* as a call to war, spiritual war against *HaSatan* and his minions and all who follow him. The *shofar* call *teruah* means both shout and alarm. We sound it today as our declaration at *Beit Shalom* that we are mobilized for spiritual war. Sound the *shofar*. I close with this: 10 “*Finally, be strong in*

the Lord and in His mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you are able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the worldly forces of this darkness, and against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist when the times are evil, and after you have done everything, to stand firm. 14 Stand firm then! Buckle the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. 15 Strap up your feet in readiness with the Good News of shalom. 16 Above all, take up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 Pray in the Ruach on every occasion, with all kinds of prayers and requests” (Ephesians 6:10-18a TLV). Amen!

This has been a heavy message, but a necessary one. Even right now, we can have the *shalom shalom*, the perfect peace which only comes through Yeshua our Messiah. Receive it now as the *Birchat HaKohenim*, the priestly prayer through which ADONAI said He would place His name on us is prayed. *Shabbat shalom!*