



**Parasha Ekev**

**August 5, 2023**

Torah: Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25  
Haftarah: Isaiah 49:14-51:3  
K'tuvim Shlichim: Romans 8:31-39

*Shalom Mishpacha.* Our *parasha* is *Ekev*, “Because.” It begins: 12 “Then it will happen, as a result (**ekev: because**) of your listening to these ordinances, when you keep and do them, that Adonai your God will keep with you the covenant kindness that He swore to your fathers” (Deuteronomy 7:12 TLV). This is a beautiful promise to Israel. Unfortunately, they did not keep and do the ordinances and because of that, we find ourselves where we are in history today. But, ADONAI’s promises go far beyond this. He has promised that He will restore all things through His Son, Yeshua and we are nearing His time of restoration. We have studied the *parshiyot* many times through the years. I encourage you to continue to read the *parasha* each week as is your custom. But, we will not be focusing on them.

For the foreseeable future, we will focus on a specific study. Today, we begin a new series of messages with the over-all title of *Talmidim Shel Yeshua*, Disciples of Yeshua. It will be presented as if you have never heard it before, which is necessary in order to present the whole picture and especially for those new to Messianic Judaism who may watch or read. What we are going to discuss throughout this study is Messianic Judaism, with a systematic approach to it. It will include all of the things that have been covered over the years, things which we have looked at through “Jewish eyes.” In this study, we will present information about Messiah Yeshua and *Sha’ul* as comprehensively as possible. The content of this series is not a prescription for those that ADONAI has called to be a part of the Church. We welcome them to watch, but the focus is for those called to Messianic Judaism. However, there will be much material applicable to both groups.

What is Messianic Judaism? Simply, it is the faith of Judaism with Messiah, *Mashiach*, having been revealed and ruling over us. Messianic Judaism began with Yeshua’s disciples in the 1<sup>st</sup> century and it has continued through the centuries with the believers who followed them. It did not begin when Yeshua died on the cross, but when He first called His disciples. During His time with His disciples and in the first eight or ten years after His death on the stake, the Messianic group was composed of only Jews, born Jews and proselytes, Gentiles who had converted to Judaism. Later, as Gentiles began to join the movement, it continued under Jewish leadership until the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century, a time when Gentiles outnumbered Jews and took over the leadership, a subject we will cover later.

We begin with information about Messianic Judaism at its inception in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. *Sha’ul*, Paul, wrote: 16 *For I am not ashamed of the Good News, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who trusts—to the Jew first and also to the Greek.* (Romans 1:16 TLV). The Good News, *Besurat HaGuelah*, is actually more completely described as *Besurat HaGeulah HaMalchut shel Yeshua HaMashiach*, the Good News of the Kingdom of Yeshua the Messiah. The Good News, the Gospel, is about Yeshua’s Kingdom, both on heaven and in earth. This means that the Good News part of it, the truth that Yeshua is G-d’s only begotten

Son who is the only way to eternal life, was given first to G-d's chosen people the Jews. But, it is given equally to the Gentiles, but through the Jews. Speaking to the Samaritan woman, Yeshua said: 22 *"You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews."* (John 4:22 TLV). But, the Good News is much more than just salvation. It is the revelation of the full and complete gift of G-d, both here on earth and also in heaven, but ultimately here on the new earth where we will reign with our Messiah Yeshua for eternity.

But, why is the Good News to the Jew first? To explain this, we must understand the progression of events in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. We hear Yeshua's words: 24 *"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."* (John 4:22 TLV). Yes, of course we also worship ADONAI in physical ways. We worship Him as covenant members responsible for covenant loyalty and *Torah*, through our praise and worship and also through the good works which we do in the world. But, that is only a part of how we worship Him. Because G-d is Spirit, our basis of relationship with Him must be spirit to spirit, G-d's *Ruach*, His Spirit, to man's spirit. This spiritual relationship can only come through a relationship with His Son Yeshua. Once that relationship is established and His Spirit is dwelling in us, we worship ADONAI through the truth of His Word, the *Torah*, which is revealed in the Bible from Genesis in the *Torah* of Moses through the Revelation of *Yochanan*, John. Every book of the Bible is anointed truth written by Jewish authors inspired by ADONAI.

Why to the Jew first? There are a number of reasons. To begin with, the Jews are a "chosen people." Most importantly, Messiah Yeshua is a Jew, not was, but is a Jew. He had to be a Jew in order to be the *Goel*, the Kinsman Redeemer. *Sha'ul* asks the question: 1 *Then what is the advantage of being Jewish? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?* (Romans 3:1 TLV). The two phrases in this verse are an example of what is called, Jewish parallelism. Both statements mean the same thing. The "advantage of being Jewish" is parallel to "the benefit of those who are called "the circumcision," the Jews. What is the advantage? *Sha'ul* gives the answer: 2 *Much in every way. First of all, they were entrusted with the sayings of God.* (Romans 3:2 TLV). Every book of the Bible was written by a Jewish author. Luke was a Gentile, but most likely also a proselyte and there is no question that he wrote with Jewish understanding. *Sha'ul* continued regarding the advantage of being Jewish: 4 ... *To them belong the adoption and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Torah and the Temple service and the promises. 5 To them belong the patriarchs—and from them, according to the flesh, the Messiah, who is over all, God, blessed forever. Amen.* (Romans 9:4b-5 TLV). The Jews are a special group in G-d's eyes and because they are, they have suffered much persecution throughout the centuries. As *Tevye* said to G-d in *Fiddler On The Roof*: "I know, I know. We are your chosen people. But, once in a while, can't you choose someone else?" But, even though none of the other people groups of the earth were chosen by ADONAI, He loves every person that He created equally and has provided a way for everyone to become covenant members of the very same covenant which He made with Israel in the flesh, the Jews.

*Sha'ul* describes this relationship with the metaphor of an olive tree: 16 *If the firstfruit is holy, so is the whole batch of dough; and if the root is holy, so are the branches.* (Romans 11:16 TLV). He is speaking of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as the firstfruit and the root. They are holy by G-d's own description and are the root of *Sha'ul*'s metaphorical olive tree described in Romans 11. The current natural branches of that tree are righteous Jews who are also holy. He continues: 17 *But if some of the branches were broken off ...* (Romans 11:17a TLV). Who are these branches that were broken off? They are Jews of the 1<sup>st</sup> century who did not enter into the New Covenant by trusting in Yeshua. They formerly were in covenant with ADONAI through the Covenant at Sinai, but did not make the change

to the New Covenant. Then, speaking to Gentiles, *Sha'ul* continues: *17 ... and you—being a wild olive—were grafted in among them and became a partaker of the root of the olive tree with its richness, 18 do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, it is not you who support the root but the root supports you.* (Romans 11:17b-18 TLV). Most of the members in Messianic Judaism are Gentile. We are 90 to 95% of the Messianic Movement. But, we must not boast of our position to the branches which were broken off. We are not the root. This is a Jewish tree, not a Gentile tree. It is growing from Jewish roots and we must acknowledge that. Our relationship with Yeshua only exists because of the Jews. *19 You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” 20 True enough. They were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but fear— 21 for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you.* (Romans 11:19-21 TLV). *Sha'ul* emphasizes that we Gentiles must not think more highly of ourselves in G-d's scheme of things than we should. That is a very real danger today. Some natural branches were broken off for unbelief and ADONAI makes it clear through *Sha'ul* that Gentiles can also be broken off. This means that we can be grafted in, saved, and have a relationship with Yeshua, but we can also be broken off from our relationship with Yeshua, become unsaved. This is a point of contention within the body of Messiah, but as you can see, I personally believe that a person can sincerely trust in Yeshua and then turn away from following Him. Yes, of course we believe that “once saved, always saved” is true, but only from ADONAI's perspective. He sees the end of our physical relationship with Yeshua, the relationship which we have with Him at the time we die, and He knows that we have remained faithful to our commitment to Yeshua. We must continue to have a faithful relationship with ADONAI through Yeshua in order to remain grafted in to this metaphorical tree. Regarding the natural branches, the Jews who were broken off for unbelief, *Sha'ul* said: *23 And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again.* (Romans 11:23 TLV). What is their unbelief? It is their failure to acknowledge that Yeshua is *Mashiach*, the Messiah, who was sacrificed for the sins of both Jew and Gentile and that G-d is now in covenant with Israel through the New Covenant. This breaking off would have happened to the majority of Jews when the New Covenant was cut through Yeshua's death. But, after His death, many came to trust in Him and were grafted back into their tree.

This New Covenant which ADONAI made with Israel was promised through the Prophet Jeremiah: *30 “Behold, days are coming” —it is a declaration of Adonai— “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.”* (Jeremiah 31:30 TLV). Why was the New Covenant with Israel necessary? ADONAI tells us: *31 ... “For they broke My covenant, though I was a husband to them;” it is a declaration of Adonai.* (Jeremiah 31:31b TLV). ADONAI gave Israel advance notice of the covenant, actually told them about it about 600 years before Yeshua was born. He cut the New Covenant in about the year 30 CE when His Son Yeshua died on the *tzelav*, the stake, crucified on the cross by the Romans. It was ADONAI's plan made before the foundation of the universe for dealing with the sins of all mankind, a plan which made it possible for a personal relationship between G-d and man. A very small group of Jews were responsible for Yeshua's death, the High Priest, those in the Sanhedrin who voted to have Him put to death and those shouting “crucify Him,” but it was the Romans who killed Him and unwittingly carried out G-d's plan. It had been His plan all along and through His Son's death, He cut a New Covenant with Israel. But, in a way, all of us killed Yeshua, because of our sins and His purpose was to die for our sins.

We must remember that the root of the olive tree remains the root. The patriarchs, the fathers, remain the fathers. They are the righteous root from which the branches grew and upon which the precious olive fruit grew, fruit produced by the Jew and Gentile righteous branches. The New Covenant which ADONAI made with Israel through Yeshua is His active

covenant today. But, the *Torah*, the Laws given through the First Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant, remain. Regarding them, ADONAI said: 32 *“But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days”* —it is a declaration of Adonai— *“I will put My Torah within them. Yes, I will write it on their heart. I will be their God and they will be My people.”* (Jeremiah 31:32 TLV). The *Torah*, ADONAI’s teaching and instruction for us, is written on our hearts by the *Ruach Kodesh*. But, not all *Torah* given through the First Covenant can be followed today. We will address what that means later.

The point of *Sha’ul’s* olive tree metaphor is now revealed. As I alluded at the beginning of this message, ADONAI’s love for the Jewish people will result in their being restored to a relationship with Him. He called them “the apple of my eye,” (Deuteronomy 32:10; Psalm 17:8; Proverbs 7:2; Lamentations 2:18; Zechariah 2:8), a phrase which means that they are the object of His love, even though they have broken covenant with Him. His great love for them will result in the restoration of those broken off for unbelief to a righteous relationship with Him in the New Covenant. *Sha’ul* said: 25 *For I do not want you, brothers and sisters, to be ignorant of this mystery—lest you be wise in your own eyes—that a partial hardening has come upon Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;..* (Romans 11:25 TLV). As *Sha’ul* said, this is a mystery. Why ADONAI decided to do it this way, we don’t know. But for whatever His reasons, He decided to first focus His attention on the Gentiles. This doesn’t mean that Jews could not be saved, because millions have been saved through the ages, grafted back into their own olive tree. *Sha’ul*, himself, was an example. He was broken off as were many other Jews in the 1<sup>st</sup> century who trusted in Yeshua and were grafted back into their tree. The greater body of Jews have received a “partial hardness” from ADONAI until the fullness of the Gentiles have come in. That partial hardness can obviously be overcome by seeking ADONAI and allowing the *Ruach Kodesh* to speak to the heart. Messianic Jews today are those who have listened to the *Ruach Kodesh*, the Holy Spirit, speaking to their hearts about Yeshua and have trusted in their Jewish Messiah. Who is their Messiah? He is their Jewish Messiah, *Ari Yehudah*, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, *BenDavid*, the Son of David, and *Melekh Yisra’el*, the King of Israel.

But, there is also a promise for “Israel,” the greater body whom *Sha’ul* refers to in this next verse: 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). ADONAI said: “When I take away their sins.” In writing this, *Sha’ul* was quoting Isaiah 59:20-21 and 27:9. But Ezekiel also spoke of this mystery: 24 *“For I will take you from the nations, gather you out of all the countries and bring you back to your own land. 25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean from all your uncleanness and from all your idols. 26 Moreover I will give you a new heart. I will put a new spirit within you. I will remove the stony heart from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Ruach within you. Then I will cause you to walk in My laws, so you will keep My rulings and do them.”* (Ezekiel 36:24-27 TLV). ADONAI said that “He will do it” seven times. What does the number seven symbolize? We can’t be sure, but a good possibility is that it symbolizes rest. Just as G-d rested on the seventh day after creating, so there is also a Sabbath rest for men and women, the rest of salvation: 9 *So there remains a Shabbat rest for the people of God. 10 For the one who has entered God’s rest has also ceased from his own work, just as God did from His.* (Hebrews 4:9-10 TLV). “All Israel’s” salvation will be a sovereign work of ADONAI. The glorious truth is that all Israel shall be saved and enter into covenant with Yeshua through the New Covenant. But, why wait. If you’re Jewish, become a first fruit along with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the others who have trusted in their *Goel*, their Kinsman Redeemer, Yeshua.

But, why Messianic Judaism? Why in the 1<sup>st</sup> century and why today? Why not some other system? It is because only the faith of Judaism, a G-d established faith, can provide the proper framework through which Messianic Judaism can participate. The framework is already there. It is the same framework which Yeshua built upon as He taught His disciples, preparing them to teach the people of the nations. He sent out His twelve with these instructions: 5 ..., *“Do not go to the Gentiles, and do not enter into any Samaritan town. 6 But go instead to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”* (Matthew 10:5b-6 TLV). This is another aspect of “to the Jew first,” that for three and a half years Yeshua only taught and ministered to the Jews. But, there are exceptions. Responding to the cry for help from a non-Jewish woman, Yeshua said: 24 ..., *“I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”* (Matthew 15:24 TLV). He didn’t turn her down, responded in mercy and met her needs, but He also made His point. This time was only for the Jews, the chosen, those who were called to be “priests to the nations.” It was His disciple’s “boot camp.” During Yeshua’s time on earth, He was sent to the Jewish people to train and equip them to carry on His ministry after He cut the covenant and left the earth. This is amplified by this statement to His disciples, what we know as “the Great Commission:” He said: 19 *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, immersing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Ruach ha-Kodesh, 20 teaching them to observe all I have commanded you. And remember! I am with you always, even to the end of the age.* (Matthew 28:19-20 TLV). Then, as He was about to ascend to His Father, He said this to them: 8 *“But you will receive power when the Ruach ha-Kodesh has come upon you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and through all Judah, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”* (Act 1:8 TLV). This was a continuation of the commission which He gave them at the Sea of Galilee. It was given to Jews who had originally been under the mantle of the Judaism of the Mosaic Covenant, but now the Messianic Judaism of the New Covenant. That their faith was Messianic Judaism is further attested to by this verse: 14 *All these with one mind were continuing together in prayer—along with the women and Miriam, Yeshua’s mother, and His brothers.* (Acts 1:14 TLV). They were praying in the Upper Room, a rented space in Jerusalem, from the time of Yeshua’s ascension to the Father until the Day of *Shavuot*, Pentecost, some ten days later. But, the Greek text doesn’t say “in prayer.” There is a word in the Greek which has been left unpronounced, a word which occurs immediately before *proseuche* (pros yu kay), the word for prayer. It is the word formed by the two letters, *tau eta, τῆ*, and is pronounced (tē) “tee,” meaning “the.” What the Greek text says is: 14 *“..steadfastly continuing in one accord in “te proseuche,” in “the Prayer.”* What, you ask, is The Prayer? Most of you know the answer. It is the *Amidah*, the Standing Prayer, a prayer originally composed of eighteen benedictions and began to be used in Jewish liturgy about a generation before Yeshua. Certainly, there would have also been free prayer among those in the Upper Room, but they continued in their custom of praying the *Amidah* daily. This custom was just one more way that ties their *halacha*, the way that they walked out their faith, to Judaism.

And, as we read the Book of Acts, we see that Messianic Judaism is continued. The disciples walked in the Judaism of the day, worshipping in the Temple and the synagogue, but recognizing the risen Messiah as their High Priest. The disciples continued to follow *Torah*, their actions acknowledging that *Torah* continued to be in effect. An example we will talk about later is *Sha’ul’s* offering of sacrifices in the Temple.

About ten days after Yeshua ascended to ADONAI, *Shimon Kefa*, Simon Peter, was speaking to a crowd of people on *Yom Shavuot*, the Day of Pentecost. Where was he when he gave that powerful sermon? He was in the Temple, the only place where observant Jews would be on *Shavuot*. 1 *When the day of Shavuot had come, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled*

*the whole house where they were sitting.* (Acts 2:1-2 TLV). They were not in “a house,” but in “the House,” a name given to the Temple. Micah spoke of it: *1 But at the end of days the mountain of Adonai’s House will be established as chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills. Peoples will flow up to it.* (Micah 4:1 TLV). The Hebrew says, *הַר בַּיִת יְהוָה*. The vowel points placed on YHVH give these letters the pronunciation *Yahweh* and that is what is written in English in *Strong’s Online Concordance*. While that could be the correct pronunciation, it also might not be. My practice, and yours too, is to pronounce YHVH as either *ADONAI*, meaning my L-rd, or *HaShem*, The Name. *Yahweh*, just one of a number of pronunciations, is probably the most frequently used by those who choose to pronounce it. We also hear *Jehovah*, *Yehovah*, *Yehuah*, *Yehovih*, *Yehowah*, *Yehuwah*, *Yuwah*, *Yihweh*, *Yoah* and others. Is anyone certain which of these is correct? We choose to follow the custom of Judaism and use alliterations to refer to YHVH and wait upon Yeshua to return to give us the correct pronunciation of His Father’s name.

Back to Micah, *har beit YHVH*, means: “the mountain of YHVH’s house. Traditionally known as *Har haBayit*, the “mountain of the house,” just what Jeremiah said: in 26:18: *וְהָרַבּוּץ*, *v’har habayit*, and translated by *Strong’s Online Concordance* as “and the mountain of the temple.” The mighty, rushing wind which filled the whole house, *habayit*, where they were sitting on *Shavuot*, was not in the Upper Room, but on the Temple Mount.

But, some believe that *Kefa* was still in the Upper Room and that is okay. This is one of those things which is not completely explained by Scripture. But practically, there is no way that the crowd spoken of, three thousand people, could have even fit in the street outside the Upper Room and be able to hear what *Kefa* was saying. There was not space in the street even for them to gather like sardines, packed in a can. The location of the Upper Room is well established. It is in what is known as “the Essene Quarter.” The house which is there now was built much later, but its oldest foundation identifies it as the early meeting place of Yeshua’s disciples. (Biblical Archeology Review, May/June 1990). The largest room in it today could probably fit no more than a hundred fifty very tightly packed, but of course, we don’t know how large it was in the first century. Three thousand men and women could not fit in either the room or the street, or why would they even come there? ADONAI sent the mighty rushing wind to the place where “all Israel” was gathered, at the Temple on the Day of *Shavuot*.

The Book of Acts shows us that Yeshua’s disciples continued to observe *Torah* even after His death. On *Shavuot*, obediently following *Torah*, Simon Peter and the disciples would have been at the Temple. There was a place there where they sometimes met called Solomon’s Portico. Situated along the eastern wall of the mount, it was directly opposite the Temple and the logical place where a large crowd of people could have congregated. After those worshipping at the Temple were startled by the mighty, rushing wind, they turned around. They had been facing the Temple, but now, they turned and saw the disciples with tongues of fire on their heads. They heard *Kefa* say: 36 “*Therefore let the whole house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him—this Yeshua whom you had crucified—both Lord and Messiah!*” (Acts 2:36 TLV). They were cut to the heart by his words and asked what they should do. *Kefa* said: 38 ..., “*Repent, and let each of you be immersed in the name of Messiah Yeshua for the removal of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Ruach ha-Kodesh.*” (Acts 2:38b TLV). A two part command, he commanded them first, to repent, and then to undergo *tevilah*, be immersed in water. But, they received the gift of the Holy Spirit while on the Temple Mount before immersion because the people heard them speaking in tongues. *Tevilah*, immersion, is itself a completely Jewish thing. It was an ancient practice, something instituted by ADONAI Himself, through the Covenant made at Sinai. However, what they would do on this day was a new thing, new in that they were to be immersed in

the name of Yeshua. About three thousand Jews underwent *tevilah*, immersing themselves in the traditional Jewish way in a *mikveh*.

But, where would they do it? Non-believers scoffed for years that there was not enough water in Jerusalem to immerse 3000 people. But, in the late 1960's, a discovery was made confirming what the Scripture had said was correct. We knew it was correct all along and even believed it before this discovery was made. A *mikveh* was uncovered by the archeologists just south of the Temple Mount and then more and more *mikvaot*, the plural, were discovered. A ritual immersion pool, a *mikveh*, can be cut into bedrock or built of mortared stones. Those for use at the Temple were probably some of both types and had been lined with plaster to prevent leaking. Filled with precisely the right amount of *mayim chayim*, living water, they were in use daily by those visiting the Temple. They were not baths for cleanliness, but baths for ritual cleanliness, an outward act which in a mystical way also cleansed the heart. The *mayim chayim*, the living water, was called that because it was from a "living source," such as, in this case, rain, or in other locations, a flowing stream. Men and women were separated and immersed only among their own sex. The immersions took place in the nude. Walking down steps into the *mikveh*, they would squat down in the water, completely immersing themselves and then rise and immediately exit. There was an attendant standing by to ensure that every strand of hair was completely submerged. About fifty of these *mikvaot* have been unearthed just below the southern steps of the Temple Mount, this large number necessary to purify the crowd of people ascending to the Temple each day. With 50 *mikvaot*, 50 people could have gone to each one. If it took an average of 3 minutes for each person to immerse themselves, the whole 3,000 could have been immersed in two and one-half hours.

It is believed that this same process of *tevilah* was followed by Yeshua when he was immersed in the Jordan River. His cousin, *Yochanan HaMatbil*, John the Immerser, was His attendant, as a painting from around 400 CE shows. John is standing on the bank and Yeshua is in the water. That was and is the traditional way of immersing oneself in Judaism. Some leaders in Messianic Judaism continue to follow this practice while others practice the Christian method of pushing the person underwater. There is no political correctness here, as I'm sure that either is acceptable to Yeshua.

On the day of *Shavuot* in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, the *Torah* was written on the hearts of those gathered at the Temple by the *Ruach Kodesh*, a fulfillment of Jeremiah 31:32. According to Jewish tradition, the first *Shavuot* took place at Mount Sinai fifty days after the escape from Egypt. At that time, ADONAI wrote the commands on stone tablets with His own finger. Some have made the point that the *Torah* written on stone led to the death of 3,000 who worshipped the golden calf while *Torah* written on the heart led to life, eternal life, of 3,000. I cannot agree with that assessment. It was not the *Torah* on stone which led to their deaths, but their own sinful hearts. *Torah* written on stone was also a good thing. It was ADONAI's way of dealing with Israel until it was time for Messiah to come. But, *Torah* written on hearts is better. Now, we have a relationship with ADONAI and Yeshua through the Holy Spirit. As we see throughout the Book of Acts, the Holy Spirit was an essential part of the life of an overcoming follower of Yeshua. They were all filled with the Spirit. *Sha'ul* commands us to be filled with the Spirit. He said: *18 And do not get drunk on wine, for that is recklessness. Instead, be filled with the Ruach,...* (Ephesians 5:18 TLV). It is time for us to begin to act like the early followers of Yeshua. We have grown soft, accustomed to luxury and the freedom to do what we want. Be filled with the Spirit and be led by the Spirit. ADONAI is speaking to us if we but listen. The Spirit of God lives within the hearts of believers, gently leading us in the paths which He has marked for us. Let's all slow down and try to hear what Yeshua is saying to us. He is calling us, urging us, to walk after Him, in His footsteps, calling us to "be His *talmidim*." But, we also receive that power that Yeshua spoke about, the power of the

*Ruach Kodesh* working through us. This is the calling of every one of us, to be Yeshua's *talmidim*. His disciples. We should desire to learn at the feet of our Master and serve Him as willing slaves. We should want our relationship with Yeshua to be like the slave who doesn't want to leave his master and allows himself to be pierced through the earlobe. This allowed him to wear an ear ring identifying him as his master's slave. Each of us can have a symbolic, invisible earring. Some do, but only Yeshua knows who they are. May we all seek to reach that level of commitment and be privileged to wear the earring of a bond slave of Messiah. *Shabbat shalom!*