



**Parashiyot Nitzavim/Vayelekh**

September 9, 2023

*Torah:* Deuteronomy 29:9-31:30  
*Haftarah:* Isaiah 61:10-63:9  
*Ketuvim Shlichim:* Romans 10:1-13/7:7-12

### **Talmidim Shel Yeshua 4**

*Shalom Mishpacha!* Today, we have a double *Torah* portion, *Nitzavim/Vayelekh*. *Nitzavim* means “Standing,” and refers to those gathered before Moses on that day. 9 “You are standing today, all of you, before Adonai your God—the heads of your tribes, your elders, your officials, all the men of Israel, 10 your children, your wives, and the outsider within your camp (from your woodchopper to your water carrier” (Deuteronomy 29:9-10 TLV). Moses went on to say that they were to cross over into ADONAI’s covenant, that is, to affirm their covenant with Him as they were about to enter Canaan, the Land of Promise. The second *parasha*, *Vayelekh*, means “and went,” referring to Moses. It is the beginning of *Moshe’s* farewell speech to Israel and an introduction to his song, “the Song of Moses,” which begins in the next chapter. We are near the end of our *Torah* cycle with only one more *parasha* remaining, *Ha’azeinu* which means “listen,” that is, to the song. The 54<sup>th</sup> portion, *V’zot HaBracha*, “This is the blessing,” is left out as a *parasha* this year and should be read with *Ha’azeinu*, even though it is not indicated.

We continue today with our topic *Talmidim Shel Yeshua* and today’s subtopic, *Yeshua Our Jewish Messiah*. About 625 years before Yeshua was born, ADONAI called *Yirmeyahu*, Jeremiah, to be His prophet. It was during a time of tremendous idolatry in Judah, the southern kingdom, something which ADONAI had prophesied through Moses in the closing chapters of Deuteronomy. The northern kingdom, Israel, had been defeated and taken into captivity about a hundred years earlier and now Judah was as almost as idolatrous as their northern tribesmen had been. Two major prophecies of Jeremiah were that 1) Judah would be taken captive by Babylon and that 2) ADONAI would cut a New Covenant with the whole House of Israel. Looking forward six hundred years, the Jews of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE were aware of Jeremiah’s prophecy of a coming new covenant, but believed that it was a renewed commitment to abide by ADONAI’s *Torah* and had no idea that it was connected to the coming of the Messiah.

About twenty years after Jeremiah prophesied the New Covenant, around 605 BCE, the first group of Jews were taken captive to Babylon. Among them was a young man named Daniel whom ADONAI would use to prophesy the coming of the Messiah. But, Daniel was an old man and had been in Babylon about sixty-five years before the time came and ADONAI sent the angel Gabriel to explain to him about the coming of the Messiah. That would have been around 540 BCE. Gabriel explained to Daniel what would happen in Israel in only four verses, Daniel 9:24-27, something which is called the Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks. In these four verses, a lot of time is covered, 490 years. Gabriel told Daniel that the weeks representing years would begin with the order to rebuild Jerusalem from its Babylonian

destruction. These 490 years would also include the time of the coming of the Messiah and what would happen afterward in the seventieth and final week of the prophecy. This prophecy is not our subject today, but for an excellent explanation of these 490 years, read *Daniel Unsealed* by Dan Bruce. The Prophet Amos explained that “ADONAI never does anything without telling His prophets” (Amos 3:7) and ADONAI foretold what was to happen in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE regarding the New Covenant and the coming of the Messiah through Jeremiah and Daniel as well as other prophets.

The beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE was a time of turmoil. The people of the Kingdom of Judah had returned from Babylonian captivity about 538 years earlier. During those 538 years, they had only two brief periods of freedom. The first was from 538 BCE to 167 BCE, 371 years of freedom and self-rule. Then came the Selucid occupation of Israel under Antiochus Epiphanes. Freed from this rule by Judah Maccabee and his brothers, Israel’s second period of freedom was from 160 BCE to 63 BCE, 97 years of freedom until the Roman’s took control. Yeshua was born during the Roman occupation and in an Israel once more under foreign domination. They were ruled by a cruel king, Herod, and the people were desperately looking for deliverance. Their deliverance was soon to come, but not in the way that the people had hoped. They wanted a King to deliver them physically, but what they got was a Deliverer for their souls, a spiritual deliverer rather than a physical one. To this day, more than two thousand years later, we are still waiting for our physical deliverer, but we know that the time for our deliverance, our redemption, is drawing near.

In about 4 BCE, Yeshua was born in Israel, a member of the Tribe of Judah, a Jew. He was to fulfill not only everything spoken about Him in prophecy, but also everything required by *Torah* of an Israelite. *1 Now it happened in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus to register all the world’s inhabitants. 2 This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 Everyone was traveling to be registered in his own city. 4 Now Joseph also went up from the Galilee, out of the town of Natzeret to Judah, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was from the house and family of David. 5 He went to register with Miriam, who was engaged to him and was pregnant.* (Luke 2:1-5 TLV). Joseph travelled from Nazareth, where he had been living, to his ancestral home, Bethlehem. He was a builder and craftsman, a jack of all trades, called in the Greek “a *tekton*.” This was a title which would also be given to Yeshua when he became an adult working with his father. It is supposed that Joseph was working in Nazareth as a *tekton*, usually translated as carpenter, when he met *Miryam*. As a *tekton*, he was much more than a carpenter and could perform all types of construction, from carpentry to stonework. As we mentioned last week, Joseph had noticed *Miryam*’s pregnancy and had planned to quietly divorce her when the angel intervened and told him that the baby was by the *Ruach Kodesh*, the Holy Spirit. Now, the time that they are travelling to Bethlehem, it is months later and *Miryam* was very much pregnant.

This paragraph was not in the online presentation, but I have decided to add it here for thought and possible discussion. Luke 2:5 states that during the couple’s travel to Bethlehem that *Miryam* was engaged to *Yosef*. We usually think in terms of them initially being betrothed, that is, having undergone the ceremony of *erusin*, but at some point having completed the process and undergone the actual marriage ceremony, *nissuin*. But, Luke says that during their travel to Bethlehem that they have only been betrothed. We are not told that they ever got married, but my thought is that they did after Yeshua was born and before they had their children. For some reason, ADONAI wished *Miryam* to give birth to Yeshua as a betrothed, but unmarried woman. We don’t know why, but it may have partly

had to do with Yosef's faith and his faithfulness to be obedient to ADONAI even as *Miryam's* pregnancy progressed and the community of Nazareth looked on.

*6 But while they were there, the time came for her to give birth— 7 and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped Him in strips of cloth and set Him down in a manger, since there was no room for them in the inn. (Luke 2:6-7 TLV). Miryam gave birth to Yeshua, her firstborn son, and placed Him in a cradle that was actually a manger, a feeding trough for animals. You may have heard that Yeshua was born in a sukkah. Does Scripture support this? Let's see. When Isaac's son Jacob returned with his family to Canaan from Padan Aram we read this: 17...but Jacob journeyed to Sukkot and built a house for himself, and for his livestock he made booths. That is the reason that place is called Sukkot. (Genesis 33:17 TLV). The word translated "booths" is sukkot, סֻכּוֹת, the plural of sukkah, and also the reason that the name of that place was called Sukkot. Yeshua's ancestor Jacob built livestock shelters, sukkot, and that is what Yeshua was born in in Bethlehem. That He was born in a sukkah does not necessarily mean that He was born during the Festival of Sukkot, but there is evidence that He may have been. When He was born is not our subject today, but He was born in a sukkah, a cattle shelter.*

When Yeshua was born, the angel told the shepherds "A savior, Greek *sótér* (so-tare) is born": *11 "A Savior is born to you today in the city of David, who is Messiah the Lord." (Luke 2:11 TLV). Where the Messiah would be born had been foretold by the Prophet Micah about 75 years even before Jeremiah prophesied the New Covenant. Through Micah, ADONAI told the people of Judah that He would bring a Messiah/King who would save them and that He would be born in Bethlehem: 1 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrata— least among the clans of Judah— from you will come out to Me One to be ruler in Israel, One whose goings forth are from of old, from days of eternity." (Micah 5:1 TLV). The people should have known from these words that the Savior was sent from ADONAI and was divine, G-d Himself. Micah foretold that this King of Israel who was to come was an eternal being.*

*21 When eight days had passed for His brit-milah, He was named Yeshua, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. (Luke 2:21 TLV). B'rit milah, Hebrew for covenant of circumcision, was performed for Yeshua on His eighth day of human life, exactly in accordance with the covenant which ADONAI made with His ancestor Abraham. The angel who came to Joseph in a dream with the name was only relaying the message. Yeshua's name was a name chosen by ADONAI, a name which would have profound significance for all of the people of the world. This baby boy whose name Yeshua meant "ADONAI is salvation" would grow up to be the Savior of His people Israel and the Savior of the people of the other nations of the earth. According to the custom of that day, the father would name baby boys at the time of their b'rit milah and Joseph named Miryam's Son, his adopted son. He named Him Yeshua as ADONAI commanded, but His full name was Yeshua BenYosef, Yeshua, son of Joseph, His adopted father. Every Jewish male was required to be brought into the Covenant ADONAI made with Abraham and circumcision was the act which sealed it. ADONAI said to Abraham: 10 "This is My covenant that you must keep between Me and you and your seed after you: all your males must be circumcised. 11 You must be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and this will become a sign of the covenant between Me and you. 12 Also your eight-day-olds must be circumcised, every male, throughout your generations,.." (Genesis 17:10-12a TLV). Circumcision is the sign in the flesh of every Israelite male that they are in covenant with ADONAI. Through this covenant of circumcision, He promised the land of Canaan as a homeland for all of Abraham's descendants. Yeshua's genealogy began this way: 1 The book of the genealogy of Yeshua ha-Mashiach, Ben-*

*David, Ben-Avraham:* (Matthew 1:1 TLV). This opening phrase states that Yeshua was not only a *ben*, a son, a descendant of King David, but also a descendant and a son of the covenant through Abraham. The cutting of the flesh of the foreskin was the official act which made Jewish males “sons of the covenant.” As faithful followers of ADONAI and covenant members of the Covenant given at Sinai, Yeshua’s parents obeyed *Torah* and faithfully did what was required by ADONAI.

Weeks have now passed in Bethlehem and the next verses show that Yeshua’s parents continued to be obedient to *Torah*: *22 And when the days of their purification were fulfilled, according to the Torah of Moses, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present to Adonai.*” (Luke 2:22 TLV). The *Torah* of Moses, so-named because he received it, was actually the *Torah* of ADONAI. He was the one who commanded mothers to be purified. For *Miryam*, as a new mother of a son, her purification was in two stages: *1 Then Adonai spoke to Moses saying: 2 “Speak to Bnei-Yisrael, instructing: If a woman conceives and bears a male child, then she will be unclean for seven days, as in the days of her niddah she will be unclean. 3 In the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin is to be circumcised. 4 She must wait during the blood of purification for 33 days. She is not to touch any holy thing, nor come into the Sanctuary, until the days of her purifying are completed.”* (Leviticus 12:1-4 TLV). For seven days after giving birth, anything which *Miryam* touched would become unclean and would have to be ritually cleansed. Her initial period of uncleanness after the birth of a son was the same length of time as for her *niddah*, her uncleanness after her menstrual period, seven days. After seven days, she would have undergone *tevilah*, immersion, and would have been clean. She could then touch everyday objects and not render them unclean. She could have relations with her husband, but she remained in a second level of uncleanness until 33 days after giving birth. During the 33 days she could touch ordinary things, but could not enter the Temple or touch holy objects. *Torah* describes what she had to do after the 33 days: *6 “When the days of her purification are completed for a son (33 days) or for a daughter (66 days), she is to bring to the kohen, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, a year old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a turtledove, for a sin offering. 7 He is to present it before Adonai and make atonement for her. Then she will be cleansed from the discharge of her blood. This is the Torah for her who gives birth, whether to a male or a female child.”* (Leviticus 12:6-7 TLV). Why ADONAI chose to have these different levels of cleanness is unknown, just as we don’t know why the period of uncleanness was twice as long for a female as for a male. One supposition is that it was because Eve tempted Adam, but we don’t really know why. It is possible that these intricate instructions may have been ADONAI’s way of testing Israel’s obedience to His covenant with them.

*22 And when the days of their purification were fulfilled, according to the Torah of Moses, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present to Adonai. 23 As it is written in the Torah of Adonai, “Every firstborn male that opens the womb shall be called holy to Adonai.”* (Luke 2:22:23 TLV). The Gospel writers did not tell everything which happened or always in the order which it happened, but by examining *Torah* we can fill in the blanks regarding what happened in Jerusalem with Yeshua and His family. In these two verses we are told that *Miryam* had passed the 33 days for purification and had come to Jerusalem and the Temple to be purified. But then, Luke switched the subject to Yeshua and stated that He was presented as a firstborn son. What these verses tell us is that the family came to Jerusalem for two purposes, *Miryam*’s purification and also Yeshua’s presentation to ADONAI as a first-born son.

Every first-born Jewish male who was not of the Tribe of Levi had to be redeemed. Because ADONAI brought death to the firstborn of Egypt when the Destroyer passed over it, but spared those of Israel, He declared that all the firstborn sons of the twelve tribes of Israel belonged to Him. 2 *“Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, from every womb of Bnei-Yisrael, both men and animals—this is Mine.”* (Exodus 13:2 TLV). When ADONAI later designated the entire Tribe of Levi (Numbers 8:14-18) to serve Him as priests and Levites, all Israelite firstborn were no longer dedicated as His servants and those that were not of the Tribe of Levi had to be redeemed. This brought about what is now traditionally called *Pidyon haBen*, the ceremony of the redemption of the firstborn son. It fulfilled ADONAI’s *Torah* requirement under the Covenant made at Sinai: 15 *“The first offspring of the womb from all flesh, whether human or animal, offered to Adonai, is yours. However, you are to redeem the firstborn of man and the firstborn of unclean animals. 16 When they are a month old, you are to redeem them at the redemption price of five shekels of silver by the Sanctuary shekel, or 20 gerahs.”* (Numbers 18:15-16 TLV). (See also Exodus 13:12; 15). When they arrived in Jerusalem, Yeshua was a little over a month old. Since He was from the Tribe of Judah and not the Tribe of Levi, He was required to be redeemed.

Luke continues: 22 *And when the days of their purification were fulfilled, according to the Torah of Moses, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present to Adonai. 23 As it is written in the Torah of Adonai, “Every firstborn male that opens the womb shall be called holy to Adonai.”* (Luke 2:22:23 TLV). This verse also references both *Miryam*’s purification and Yeshua’s redemption. Luke didn’t describe how it was done, but Joseph would have paid 5 shekels redemption money to redeem Yeshua as we just read in Numbers 18. This next verse seems to be out of the order in which it mentioned in verse 22: 24 *So they offered a sacrifice according to what was said in the Torah of Adonai: “a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons.”* (Luke 2:24 TLV). Those two birds were actually *Miryam*’s purification offerings. *Torah* says: 8 *“If she cannot afford a lamb, then she is to bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. Then the kohen will make atonement for her, and she will be clean.”* (Leviticus 12:8 TLV). They couldn’t afford a lamb and so offered the birds. This completed the immediate *Torah* requirements of 1) purification of the mother at 7 days, 2) *b’rit milah* of the son on the 8th day, 3) redemption of firstborn son after 30 days and 4) ritual purification of the mother after 33 days. Yeshua’s parents were faithful to fulfill all *Torah* requirements for both them and their son. Even though He was the Son of G-d, when Yeshua took on humanity, He also took on all of ADONAI’s requirements for Jews under the Covenant made at Sinai.

About a year later, the magi came from the east to worship the King. They knew of Yeshua’s birth from the writings of the prophets. We don’t know exactly how they learned about Him, but it may have been through Daniel’s influence in Babylon. Or, it could just as easily have been through the many Jews who remained in the Media-Persia Empire after the captivity and did not return to Israel. 1 *Now after Yeshua was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, 2 saying, “Where is the One who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.”* (Matthew 2:1-2 TLV). The Magi saw Yeshua’s star and travelled a great distance to worship Him. Another way that they might have known about this was through Balaam’s prophecies about Israel and specifically, a star. He prophesied: 17 *“I see him, yet not at this moment. I behold him, yet not in this location. For a star will come from Jacob, a scepter will arise from Israel.”* (Numbers 24:17a TLV). This prophecy could have caused them to follow the bright star which appeared in the heavens and guided them to Bethlehem. Yeshua’s kingship was signified by the scepter, a ruler’s staff. When the Magi arrived in Bethlehem,

they found the one year old Yeshua with his mother *Miryam* and they worshipped Him, presenting Him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Yeshua's earthly parents did everything required by ADONAI in *Torah*. During His Sermon on the Mount, Yeshua told us: 18 "*Amen, I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or serif shall ever pass away from the Torah until all things come to pass.*" (Matthew 5:18 TLV). Yeshua, the perfect Son of ADONAI, was sent to live a perfect life on the earth which included perfectly observing every *Torah* requirement. As a sinless human Jewish man, He did all these things, not so that we would not have to, but because He was also G-d in the flesh, perfect in every way. He is our example, the perfect picture of how we are to respond to *Torah*. While we cannot today respond to those commands of *Torah* which require a Temple and Levitical priesthood because they are currently inactive, we can respond to the remaining commands. As Yeshua said, they will not pass away until heaven and earth pass away.

When we understand why ADONAI did all these things, we realize that He did them for us. He required the firstborn sons of Israel to be redeemed and required His only Son, His firstborn, to be redeemed as a son of Israel. He did it for us. The Son not of the Tribe of Levi was redeemed to become, not only a priest, but Israel's High Priest (Hebrews 4:15) under the New Covenant. All of this was done because of the great love of the Creator for His creation. He loves us with an everlasting love. In the prelude leading up to the prophecy about the New Covenant, ADONAI said to Israel: 2 ..... "*Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love. Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.*" (Jeremiah 31:2b TLV). ADONAI's everlasting love has been shown in many ways, but especially through making a New Covenant with Israel, His chosen nation, a covenant which would be cut with His own Son's blood. And today, He is drawing them, drawing them by His *Ruach HaKodesh* and He receives those who respond, honoring them as the firstfruit of all Israel as we excitedly wait upon the salvation of all Israel. Yeshua said that "G-d so loved the world that He gave His only Son, His *echad* Son, that whoever believes in Him will not be destroyed, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16). ADONAI loves Israel, His chosen people and the people of the Nations and Yeshua loves them with the same love as that of the Father. Yeshua said to His disciples: 9 "*Just as the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you. Abide in My love!*" (John 15:9 TLV). The love of the Father and the Son for us is something that is beyond human comprehension. We can't understand or grasp its magnitude. G-d's ways are not our ways. He chose to have Israel live under Tabernacle and Temple law for thousands of years before He sent His Son to become the perfect sacrifice, the fulfillment of the New Covenant. Our response to this great gift is to love ADONAI in return. We, who have received G-d's mercy of salvation, must return His love by being obedient to our Master, our Messiah. Yeshua, whose name means ADONAI's salvation, is our Jewish Messiah. He was perfectly obedient to all that ADONAI required of Him, even death on a tree. When He returns, our Jewish Messiah will be our Jewish King and He will rule over us from Jerusalem, the city in which ADONAI has placed His name. *Shabbat shalom!*