



Rosh Hashana

September 16, 2023

Talmidim Shel Yeshua 6

Shabbat Shalom Mishpacha! The introductory remarks today are from my *Rosh Hashanah* message given to our group on September 29, 2000, 23 years ago. What it shows is that ADONAI's message to us has not changed. What we were looking for as Messianic Jews and Gentiles has not changed. From that message, here are some associations with *Rosh Hashana*.

1. The *Akedah*. The "binding of Isaac" in Genesis 22. Abraham's offering of his son, reminds us of *Yom Teruah*, "The Day of the *Shofar* Blast," the alternate name of *Rosh Hashanah*. It reminds us because of the horn of the ram which became God's substitute sacrifice for Isaac. The rabbis have reflected on this for thousands of years, believing that Abraham went to the mountains of Moriah in the month of *Tishrei*. 2. The theme of repentance. Repentance is encouraged during the 40 day period from the first day of *Elul*, the month preceding *Tishrei*, and ending on the 10th day of *Tishrei*, the day of *Yom Kippur*. This entire season is a call to *t'shuvah*, repentance. The *shofar* is blown in traditional synagogues each morning during the month of *Elul* to warn the people to repent and to turn to ADONAI. One of our very astute Messianic rabbis years ago advanced the theory that *t'shuvah* is depicted at precisely this time period in the liturgical year in the *Torah* and *Haftarah* readings just preceding *Rosh HaShanah*. He states that there is a precise seven week period for the *Torah* and *Haftarah* readings for this same period. As we know, the *Torah*, the five books of Moses, and the *Haftarah*, the prophetic writings, are divided into portions for each *Shabbat* in the calendar year. The rabbi recognized the passages from Isaiah in Luke 3 and also Yeshua's reading from Isaiah in the synagogue in Nazareth in Luke 4 which show that the *Haftarah* portions are presented in the traditional order. Additional evidence is added when we realize that Yeshua's three answers to the questions of *HaSatan*, the Adversary, in Luke 4 when he was in the wilderness, are from the *Torah* portions in Deuteronomy prescribed and they fit with the *Haftarah* for that series of Sabbaths. What could this mean for us? First, it provides a clear link with our practices of today as Messianic Jews and Gentiles to the Judaism which Yeshua practiced. Second, it reminds us that there is always a need for repentance, even though we are believers in Yeshua as Messiah. It's as if ADONAI Himself ordered our *Torah* and *Haftarah* readings to cause Israel to focus on repentance during this forty day period and I'm certain that He did. 3. The *shofar* itself. The horn of the ram which was provided as a substitute sacrifice for Isaac alludes to the *shofar* and is also a link to *Rosh Hashanah*. At Mount Sinai, the *Torah* was given to Israel with the sound of the *shofar*. We also remember that with the sound of the *shofar*, Israel conquered Jericho, and it was also sounded to signal the assembly during war. The watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem blew the *shofar*, and it was also blown at the beginning of each Jubilee year. It was blown to announce the festivals and the new moon, and will be blown to usher in the Day of the Lord as shown in Joel 2:1. And then, the *shofar* reminds us of Yeshua's return. In fact, the ancient rabbis also saw that connection. In *Ma'ase Dani'el*, a *midrash*

from the 8th century, it says: “*Moshiach ben David* (Messiah, Son of David), *Eliyahu* (Elijah) and *Z’rubavel* (Zerubbabel), peace be upon him, will ascend the Mount of Olives. And, *Moshiach* will command *Eliyahu* to blow the *shofar*. The light of the six days of Creation will return and be seen, the light of the moon will be like the sight of the sun, and Adonai will send full healing to all the sick of *Yisra’el*. The second blast which *Eliyahu* will blow will make the dead rise. They will rise from the dust and each man will recognize his fellow man, and so will husband and wife, father and son, brother and brother. All will come to the *Moshiach* from the four corners of the earth, from east and from west, from north and from south. The children of *Yisra’el* will fly on the wings of eagles and come to the *Moshiach*.” There is much to look forward to.

We now go back to our theme message continued from last night. You are *Talmidim shel Yeshua*, Yeshua’s disciples, and the fact that we focus on the Hebraic content of Yeshua’s message, reveals that you are serious about being His disciples. The Prophet Hosea wrote: *6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Since you rejected knowledge, I will also reject you from being My kohen. Since you forgot the Torah of your God, just so I will forget your children.* (Hosea 4:6 TLV). ADONAI’s original message was judgment of a certain group of priests who were not ministering His truth to the common Israelite, but it has a very definite application in Yeshua’s body today. Do Yeshua’s followers actively seek knowledge today or do they just digest what is spoon fed to them? Do you ever encounter situations such as the one between the Ethiopian eunuch and Phillip? The Holy Spirit prompted Phillip to approach the man who was sitting in his chariot. He said: *30 ... , “Do you understand what you are reading?” 31 “How can I,” he said, “unless someone guides me?”* (Acts 8:30b-31 TLV). We are all called to be Phillips. We are the priests under our High Priest Yeshua who have been ordained to teach the knowledge of Him. The body of Yeshua is perishing for the lack of knowledge and you are His disciples who are being called to be Phillips for this age. Don’t take this information lightly. Study it and discuss it among yourselves. Ask questions and seek answers so that the whole body of Messiah can be built up.

As we concluded the message last night, we were speaking about *Yochanan HaMatbil*, John the Immerser. We are continuing to explore the relationship between Yeshua, the Messiah and His cousin John, the Elijah figure of that day. The Judean leaders sent out *kohanim* and Levites to ask John “who are you?” He said, “I am not the Messiah.” They asked: *21 “What then? Are you Elijah?” they asked him. “I am not,” said John. “Are you the Prophet?” “No,” he answered.* (John 1:21 TLV). He was asked three questions and John gave them three answers. He said that he was not the Messiah, that he was not Elijah and he was not the Prophet. He was the Elijah figure, but he didn’t know it. But, he knew that he was not the Messiah or the Prophet. We know who the Messiah is, but who is the Prophet? The Prophet is “the prophet like Moses” whom Moses prophesied: *15 “Adonai your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your midst—from your brothers. To him you must listen.”* (Deuteronomy 18:15 TLV). Under Rome’s power, the people of Israel were looking for a deliverer, Messiah, Elijah or the Prophet. Yeshua was two of these three individuals. They would soon find out about Him as *Mashiach*, but He was also the Prophet for whom they were waiting. The people of Israel of the 1st century were closely watching for the things the prophets had said and were hoping for the prophesied Messiah, for Elijah and the Prophet like Moses to come in their time. They were chafing under Rome’s rule and desperately wanted a deliverer. When they heard that John had begun to immerse for repentance, they had to go and find out who this man was.

So, they went to the Jordan River where John was immersing for *t'shuvah*, repentance of sins. John said that he was: 23 ... *"the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of Adonai," as the prophet Isaiah said."* (John 1:23b TLV). He said: 26 *"I immerse in water,"* *"Among you stands One you do not know, 27 coming after me, whose sandals I'm not worthy to untie."* (John 1:26a-27 TLV). We are not specifically told so, but I believe that John personally knew his cousin Yeshua. He knew Him as a family member, but he did not know that He was the Messiah until ADONAI revealed it to him at the Jordan River the next day. 29 *The next day, John sees Yeshua coming to him and says, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is the One about whom I told you, 'He who comes after me is above me, because He was before me.'* 31 *I didn't know Him, but I came immersing with water so that He might be revealed to Israel."* (John 1:29-31 TLV). John knew through the Holy Spirit that there was One coming after him, but he didn't know until ADONAI revealed it to him at that moment that it was his cousin Yeshua. He said: "I didn't know Him," that is, he meant that he didn't know Yeshua was the Messiah. The next verse verifies that this was knowledge given to him by ADONAI right at that time: 32 *Then John testified, "I have seen the Ruach coming down like a dove out of heaven, and it remained on Him. 33 I did not know Him; but the One who sent me to immerse in water said to me, 'The One on whom you see the Ruach coming down and remaining, this is the One who immerses in the Ruach ha-Kodesh. 34 And I have seen and testified that this is Ben-Elohim."* (John 1:32-34 TLV). John saw the Holy Spirit coming down on his cousin Yeshua and the Holy Spirit revealed Him as *Ben Elohim*, the Son of G-d.

It's presented a little differently in Matthew: 13 *Then Yeshua came from the Galilee to John, to be immersed by him in the Jordan. 14 But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be immersed by You, and You are coming to me?" 15 But Yeshua responded, "Let it happen now, for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."* So John yielded to Him. 16 *After being immersed, Yeshua rose up out of the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Ruach Elohim descending like a dove and coming upon Him. 17 And behold, a voice from the heavens said, "This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased!"* (Matthew 3:13-17 TLV). It is very conceivable that Yochanan, who was a *kohen*, a priest, and also the foretold Elijah, immersed Yeshua according to Jewish tradition regarding a change of status, that is, to begin His ministry as *Mashiach*. Yeshua said: *"it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."* Yeshua said: "for us." It was something that they were to do together. Yeshua's immersion was a sign of ADONAI's approval of Him and also that He was anointed and equipped for ministry. The act of *tevillah*, immersion, fulfilled all righteousness because it was an acknowledgement that Yeshua was willing to take on the role as our Messiah and also that John carried out his part in fulfilling righteousness. The immersion which John was proclaiming was an immersion of repentance, something which Yeshua did not need. This is possibly another reason that Yeshua said "I want you to immerse me," even though He had no need to repent. His immersion also fulfilled the tradition for Jewish leaders to be immersed before assuming a new status. Yeshua taught Nicodemus about *tevillah* and his need to be immersed, an immersion described as being "born again of the Spirit." Read John 3:1-12. But, in the overall Jewish tradition, there were other reasons for being immersed, a change of status; such things as being crowned as king, becoming a member of the *Sanhedrin*, a couple preparing to marry, ritual purity before entering the Temple and in John's case, repentance. Immersion was not a new thing, not something which John invented. It was a very important process commanded by ADONAI and dated back to the time of giving the *Torah* in the wilderness. Because of what John did, he was known as *Yochanan haMatbil*, John the Immerser or John the Baptist, from the Greek *baptizo*, meaning

to dip. Because John immersed Him, Yeshua's status changed from being an ordinary citizen of Israel into His anointed ministry as *Mashiach*, the ministry of proclaiming the Kingdom of G-d. This was the "fulfilling of all righteousness."

There are two more aspects about Yeshua as Messiah which were revealed by His coming to John. John said: 26 ... "Among you stands One you do not know, 27 coming after me, whose sandals I'm not worthy to untie." (John 1:26b-27 TLV). This statement is suggestive of Yeshua being the *goel*, the kinsman redeemer of Israel. The overall question was, "Who has the right to redeem Israel?" John had said: 29 ..., "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29b TLV). This is a direct reference to Yeshua as the Passover Lamb. As we continue our study, we recognize more and more that a major underlying theme of our message series is that the Bible is a completely Jewish book and that we cannot properly understand it without recognizing that is what it is. To try to read it in any other context is to distort the original message. In that same regard, Yeshua is our Jewish Messiah and He cannot be properly understood without seeing Him in His full Jewish context.

Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, is now just ten days away. It has tremendous significance for Jews today. Their prayer is that they would individually be "sealed," that is, given another year. But, in Yeshua's day, *Yom Kippur* was an annual corporate atonement for the sins of Israel. Even from the time of the first *Yom Kippur*, one which Israel observed in the wilderness, Yeshua had been pictured in the prescribed sacrifices for that day, a bull and two goats. But now, in the year 30 CE, He was no longer a picture, but the actual sacrifice. It happened at Passover that year when Yeshua died on the cross as our Passover Lamb. But, is He only our Passover Lamb? No, He is not. He is much more and there is a direct connection between Yeshua as the Passover Lamb and *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement?

The Book of Hebrews (10:1-4) tells us that it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats, the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement, to take away sins. That is because these sacrifices only covered the sins. Picture in your mind a pile of sins with a covering of blood on them. Although covered, the sins are still there. That is why the animal sacrifices on *Yom Kippur* had to be repeated year after year. Their blood could provide limited atonement, a covering for one year, but not a complete removal of sin. Those three animal sacrifices were but a shadow of the reality which was to come, ADONAI's perfect sacrifice, Yeshua. In addition to being the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world, not just covers them, He is the fulfillment of the *Yom Kippur* sacrifices and He is also our Kinsman Redeemer.

The answer regarding the kinsman redeemer can be found in the way that legal ownership was determined in ancient Israel. It was through the principle of the *go'el*, גֹּאֵל. In English, "redeemer," and by definition, meaning "a person who is the nearest relative of another." From this, we get the term "kinsman redeemer." The way that it functioned is described in the Book of Ruth. In that story, we learn how Boaz, a resident of Bethlehem, redeemed the physical property, the land of his deceased relative *Chilion*, but in the "deal" he also got *Chilion's* widow *Rut*, Ruth, as his wife. Through the "kinsman redeemer principle," a legal method of transaction in ancient Israel, that new couple, a couple united by ADONAI, Boaz and Ruth, became the ancestors of our Messiah Yeshua. It was a mixed marriage. Boaz, was a Jew and Ruth a Gentile, a Moabite. Their marriage is also a beautiful picture of ADONAI's eternal plan to redeem the people of the nations of the earth, the Gentiles, through His chosen nation, Israel, the Jews. In the ancient principle, the redemption could only be

made by the closest relative. Then, after it was determined who that individual was, another question had to be answered. Would this person be willing to accept the position of *go'el*, the redeemer?

In Boaz's situation, we learn that there was a closer relative to Ruth's deceased husband who had to first be considered, but he declined to redeem the property. Read the four short chapters of the Book of Ruth as you reflect on this message. It's a great story and will help you to better understand how it also relates to Yeshua. *6 The kinsman said, "Then I cannot redeem it for myself, or else I might endanger my own inheritance"* (Ruth 4:6a TLV). His refusal placed Boaz in the position of being the legal redeemer. The closer relative said: *6... "You take my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem it"* (Ruth 4:6b). And, Boaz did.

The redemption always took place in front of witnesses who would sign the document in the way that witnesses sign a deed today. The witnesses were the elders of the town of Bethlehem who gathered at the city gate, the place where business would take place. This whole affair seems cut and dried and legal and emotionless, but I have to believe that Boaz was in it because he loved Naomi, not that love was a requirement for redemption. But, all of his actions showed that he loved her. He allowed her complete access to his fields for gleaning and he even encouraged her not to glean in anyone else's field. He gave her food and water and watched over her. I have to believe that there was more in Boaz's motive than just gaining property. And, we cannot forget the inspiration of the *Ruach*, the Holy Spirit. Did ADONAI guide Boaz to this decision and was love a part of that marriage? I believe that the answer is yes to both questions. It was ADONAI's plan for a Jew and a Gentile to become the ancestors of our Jewish Messiah, a picture of Messiah's love for all of the people of His creation.

Here is how the redemption system was carried out. *7 Now in the past in Israel, one removed his sandal and gave it to another, in order to finalize the redemption and transfer of a matter. This was a legal transaction in Israel. 8 So the kinsman said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself," then took off his shoe.* (Ruth 4:7-8 TLV). The closer relative declined to redeem Ruth's husband's property. By taking off his shoe and handing it to Boaz, he signified that he gave up his legal claim to the lands of Ruth's deceased husband, lands which Boaz could now redeem by marrying Ruth. The closer relative initially wanted to redeem the property, that is, until he found out that to get it he also had to marry Ruth. But, for Boaz, marrying Ruth was not a problem. He gladly accepted his relative's shoe, the action which declared him the *go'el*, the kinsman redeemer. Boaz redeemed the property, married Ruth, and the rest is history. Their marriage produced King David and his line, the kings of Israel, and his descendant, the rightful, eternal King, Yeshua.

What does this type of redemption have to do with Yeshua? There is no direct information regarding this subject in the writings of Yeshua's followers. But, there is a tiny hint in one place. John was Yeshua's cousin. They were related. We learn about this in the story about *Miryam*, Yeshua's mother, who travelled to visit her relative Elizabeth, John's mother, a member of the Tribe of Levi. The story is in Luke chapter 1. Elizabeth was married to Zechariah, a man from the Tribe of Levi, who was a *kohen*, a priest of Israel. Their son John was also a *kohen*, but he had rejected his role of serving in the Temple to be in the wilderness and to proclaim ADONAI's message of repentance. We know John as John the Baptist, *Yochanan Hamtbil* in Hebrew, John the Immerser.

John said: 26 "Among you stands One you do not know, 27 coming after me, whose sandals I'm not worthy to untie." (John 1:26b-27). Word had gotten back to Jerusalem that a man was immersing people in the Jordan River and preaching repentance. These officials from Jerusalem wanted to know who this man was. But, John said to them, "no, I'm not the Messiah, I'm not Elijah and I'm not the Prophet," and told them about another man, one who did have the authority about which they were inquiring. By saying that he was unworthy of untying Yeshua's sandals, he said to them that he, a relative of Yeshua, was "not" the kinsman redeemer. We can paraphrase what John said in this way: "Yeshua is the owner of the sandal of the *go'el* and He has the right to redeem Israel; He is the Kinsman Redeemer. He is the Redeemer who is the Messiah." The initial redemption of Israel was spiritual, not physical. It involved no real property, but it did involve the souls of every Israelite. By dying as a sacrifice for their sins, Yeshua redeemed His kinsmen.

In the Book of Ruth, Boaz's relative's words were: "*Buy it for yourself*". As the only possible redeemer of all Israel, Yeshua, the rightful descendant of King David, had the right to redeem Israel, to "buy" their salvation with His own blood. Isaiah prophesied: 20 "*But a Redeemer will come to Zion, and to those in Jacob who turn from transgression.*" It is a declaration of Adonai." (Isaiah 59:20 TLV). Redeemer is translated from the Hebrew, *goel*. Isaiah said: a *goel* will come to Zion, to Israel. ADONAI's *Goel*, whom we know is Yeshua, has come to Zion and the people of Israel, the Jews. But, He has also come to all who call upon His name. *Sha'ul*, speaking of the Messiah, said: 13 "*For Everyone who calls upon the name of Adonai shall be saved.*" (Romans 10:13 TLV). John, Yeshua's cousin, was a *kohen*, a priest of Israel and the Elijah figure calling people into repentance in the 1st century, but, he had no legal right to redeem Israel. His action of calling them to repentance was a step toward their redemption, but he was not the redeemer. As he said, he was not worthy to untie Yeshua's sandal. Yeshua was and is the *Goel*, the Redeemer of Israel.

During this season of repentance, we especially pray for ADONAI's chosen people, the Jews. *Sha'ul* was especially distressed about their souls: 1 *I tell the truth in Messiah—I do not lie, my conscience assuring me in the Ruach ha-Kodesh— 2 that my sorrow is great and the anguish in my heart unending. 3 For I would pray that I myself were cursed, banished from Messiah for the sake of my people—my own flesh and blood, 4 who are Israelites.* (Romans 9:1-4a TLV). On this Day of *Rosh Hashanah* and during the coming ten days of awe and *Yom Kippur*, we are especially praying for our Jewish brothers and sisters, praying that their eyes would be opened, that they would recognize and trust in their *Goel*, their Kinsman Redeemer, Yeshua.

ADONAI's name for this day is *Yom T'ruah*, the "day of shouting," with shout referring to a *shofar* blast. ADONAI began His revelation of His *Torah* to Israel at Mount Sinai with a heavenly *shofar* blast: 18 *Now the entire Mount Sinai was in smoke, because Adonai had descended upon it in fire. The smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace. The whole mountain quaked greatly. 19 When the sound of the shofar grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him with a thunderous sound.* (Exodus 19:18-19 TLV). If that was the first *shofar*, there also has to be a last *shofar*. We are here today on *Rosh Hashanah* between the two sounds of the *shofar*, after the first *shofar*, but waiting for the last *Shofar* to sound. The sound of the *shofar* is ADONAI's way of getting our attention when He is about to do something important. The First *Shofar* which sounded at Sinai was not blown by earthly lips and lungs. In rabbinic tradition, (from *Pirkei Avot*) the First and Last *Shofarot* are the two horns of the ram which was caught in the thicket and became the substitute sacrifice for Abraham's son, Isaac in Genesis chapter 22. It teaches that the left horn was the one blown

on Mount Sinai and the right horn will be blown to herald the coming of the Messiah. The right horn is what we know as the Last *Shofar*. In the first century, the time of Yeshua, the “Last *Shofar*” meant a specific day in the year. In Hebrew thought there are three *shofarot* which have names; the First *Shofar*, the Last *Shofar*, and the Great *Shofar*, or *Shofar HaGadol*. The First *Shofar* was blown on *Shavuot* at Mount Sinai. It was a signal from ADONAI that He had betrothed Himself to Israel with the giving of the *Torah*. The Last *Shofar* is synonymous with *Rosh HaShanah*, the Festival of Trumpets, which today is thought to be the day on which the Messiah will be revealed. The Great *Shofar*, *Shofar HaGadol*, is blown on *Yom Kippur* (Leviticus 25:9), a sign from ADONAI of the importance of that event, the announcing of the *Yovel*, the Jubilee, the time of our eternal rest. Today we are physically between the blowing of the First *Shofar* at Mount Sinai and the blowing of the Last *Shofar*. Our *Mashiach* is near, even at the door. He taught us: 9 “*Therefore, pray in this way: ‘Our Father in heaven, sanctified be Your name. 10 Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’*” (Matthew 9:9-10 TLV). The next coming of our *Goel*, Israel’s Kinsman Redeemer, will be for what Israel wanted in the 1st century, physical redemption. To be able to join Him as *Goel* in His physical kingdom, every person must establish a spiritual relationship with Him before He returns. If you don’t know Yeshua, trust in Him today! King Yeshua, we await You! *L’shana Tovah* and *Shabbat shalom!*