



Erev Rosh Hashanah

October 2, 2024

At sunset tonight, 7:19 PM here in Thomasville, it became Hebrew year 5785. Happy New Year! Another year has come and gone in the history of Israel since ADONAI called Abraham. Since then, each year has been important in its own way, and each year bringing us closer to the event for which we're all waiting: the return of Yeshua, our Messiah, and His eternal kingdom on Earth. When Abram was called, none of Noah's descendants had a relationship with ADONAI. Ham's descendant, Nimrod, created a kingdom for himself, and the people of that area decided to make a name for themselves by building a tower high into the heavens. When ADONAI called *Avram*, a descendant of Noah's son Shem, *Avram* began a relationship with ADONAI, one which was passed on to his descendants, the Israelites. Their journey through the centuries finally led to the event that ADONAI planned to use to bless the Nations. Using the Jewish people as His instrument, ADONAI brought forth "the Blessing of Abraham." He said: **<1>** *2 "My heart's desire is to make you into a great nation, to bless you, to make your name great so that you may be a blessing. 3 My desire is to bless those who bless you, but whoever curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."* (Genesis 12:2-3 TLV). All of the families of the earth would be blessed. The blessing came through Abraham's descendant, Yeshua. Nimrod was seeking to make a name, and he built up a kingdom for himself. The tower of Babel was the effort of the people of that day, and the spirit of Babel, the idea that humanity controls their destiny, the spirit of humanism, continues today. It continues to be a powerful opposing spiritual force that comes from and continues to be spread by the author of lies, *HaSatan*, the Adversary. It is and always was a battle in the supernatural. It is between ADONAI, good, and *HaSatan*, evil. Everyone is given a choice and can choose whom they will follow. ADONAI was always present and available after the flood, but mankind of that time decided to "do it themselves," and they rejected the relationship of fellowship and love offered to them by their Creator. Knowing our G-d, we know that He would have reached out to everyone. They didn't listen. But it wasn't so with Abraham. He listened to God's voice and believed Him. And because *Avraham Aveinu*, our father Abraham, the father of the Jewish people, whom we Gentiles can also call father, listened to ADONAI's voice, we are now heirs to the promise. Jews are the physical descendants of Abraham and heirs to the promise, but Gentiles are spiritual descendants of Abraham and equally heirs to the promise. Writing to the Galatian congregation, *Sha'ul*, declared this truth when he said: **<2>** *28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female—for you are all one in Messiah Yeshua. 29 And if you belong to Messiah, then you are Abraham's seed—heirs according to the promise* (TLV). We are one in Yeshua, Jews, Gentiles, males, females, blacks, whites, and any other color of any race or national origin. He has made us one, and when we really understand that truth, it will free us from *HaSatan's* lies.

Yeshua died for our sins in the 1st century and faithful Messianic Jews and Gentiles worshipped together in peace before and after the destruction of the Temple. Early in the 2nd century, *HaSatan*, the Father of Lies, found fertile fields to plant his poisonous seed. One who fell for his lies was Marcion, who taught that the Hebrew Scriptures have no value or authority for the Church. Marcion taught that the grace of G-d, as taught by Paul, had

replaced the Old Covenant. According to him, the old legalism of the Bible had been fulfilled, and a new dispensation of grace had been inaugurated. He believed that Moses brought condemnation, but Paul enabled men and women to discover God's grace. He was aware of Yeshua's statement in Matthew 5:17, in which He said, 17 "*Do not think that I came to abolish the Torah or the Prophets! I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.*" (Matthew 5:17 TLV). Marcion changed the words to read, "Think not that I have come to fulfill the law but to destroy it." That's the message that has been passed down through the centuries, Yeshua was against the Law. There were many more things that Marcion taught, things which we would find heretical, but eventually, he was declared a heretic by the majority Christian body of his day. But his teachings had already spread, and some are still in the Church today.

One of the most damaging results of *HaSatan's* lies through this man is that many in the Church believe his teaching that "the Hebrew Scriptures have no value or authority for the Church." But we know that is not true. The Bible is one complete book, and there is no divider page between the last chapter of the *Tanakh*, the Hebrew Bible, and the first page of the *Ketuvim Shlichim*, the writings of Yeshua's disciples, the *B'rit Chadasha*, the New Covenant Scriptures. Yeshua is pictured and foreshadowed throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, the way His first disciples recognized Him, and He is there for today's disciples to see Him. These truths can unite us as a body rather than separate us. We understand that Yeshua's followers in the Church must make their own decisions regarding theology, and we are not teaching them. But we do want to have a relationship of love and understanding with them. You here tonight know that ADONAI's complete plan cannot be found in just the *B'rit Chadasha*, the New Covenant Scriptures. His plans are embedded throughout the Scriptures, from Genesis through Revelation. Much of the understanding of prophecy and ADONAI's plans for the earth are found in His revelation through the Jews. *Sha'ul* said of the Jews: 3... *They were entrusted with the sayings of God* (Romans 3:2b TLV), the "very oracles of God" in some versions. And the fact that Jews have written all of the Scriptures and have been entrusted with them is the point to which we are now returning. We know that Luke wasn't Jewish, but he may have been a convert to Judaism. But even if he wasn't, he wrote from the Hebraic perspective of all of Yeshua's Jewish disciples. The Church is beginning to realize that there is value in understanding the Hebrew Bible.

We are gathered here tonight because ADONAI has called us together. He said: 24 "*Speak to Bnei-Yisrael, saying: In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you are to have a Shabbat rest, a memorial of blowing (shofarot), a holy convocation.*" (Leviticus 23:24 TLV). We don't fully understand ADONAI's purpose for this festival or even if we have understood His words correctly. He said you are to have a שַׁבְּתוֹן--זְכָרוֹן תְּרוּעָה, a *shabbaton zikaron teruah*. The Hebrew *Mechon Mamre* Scriptures translate it as "a memorial proclaimed with the blast of horns, a holy convocation." The word *teruah* is somewhat of a mystery. It means "shout," but over the years, it has come to mean "a *shofar* blast." The *teruah*, the shout, is the third of the blasts we have sounded tonight and the name we use for this day, *Yom Teruah*, the Day of the *Shofar* Blast. The first *shofar* sound is the *Tekiah*, a 2-3 second blast. The next call is the *Shevarim*, a wailing, mournful sound made by three short blasts. The third, the *Teruah*, is nine staccato notes. The fourth blast is the *Tekiah Gedolah*, the "Great *Tekiah*," a blast held as long as possible. The first blast, the *Tekiah*, a long blast brings people to attention. It says, "Pay attention; something important is about to happen," and is said to be the sound of the King's coronation, possibly a foreshadowing of the "last *shofar*" when Yeshua returns for us. The second blast, the *Shevarim*, sounds like crying and may symbolize distress or alarm. The nine staccato blasts of the *Teruah* announce the New Year as ADONAI said in Leviticus 23:24. He said: "On the first day of the month, you are to

teruah,” that is, to “shout.” Shout, in that sense, the *shofar* blowing, announces the New Year. But shouting may have meaning other than blasts on a *shofar*. When Israel entered Canaan and prepared to conquer Jericho, they marched around the city once each day for six days. On the seventh day, seven *kohanim* with ram’s horns continually blew as the people circled the city seven times. Then, when they made a *tekiah gedolah*, along blast on the *shofarot*, the people were told to “*teruah gedolah*,” shout with a great shout! And, the walls fell down flat by ADONAI’s power. The *shofar* has had tremendous significance for Israel in the past and we expect it to again. Scripture prophesies a “last *shofar*,” and we await it and the deliverance it will bring.

Every seven years, the *Shemittah*, the release from debts and the bondage of slavery, takes place. In the principle of release, which applies physically to crops, land, and debts, we see the principle of forgiveness. The principle of release is also very applicable to forgiveness because not only is the person holding unforgiveness released, but also the person who forgives is spiritually released. A central principle of *Shemittah* is forgiveness, extending far beyond what the *Torah* prescribes for Israel every seven years. 5785 is not a *Shemittah* year, with the next one not beginning until 5789. But forgiveness is a principle we are to exercise whenever we need to forgive. *Tefilat HaTalmidim*, the Disciple’s Prayer, which we pray often, is found in Matthew chapter 6. We ask our Father to forgive us. We pray: *12 And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors.* (Matthew 6:12 TLV). But we often stop right there, not considering the complete meaning of what we have just prayed. But be careful what you pray. In praying this, we say, “We have forgiven.” If we ask our Father to pardon our transgressions and continue to harbor unforgiveness towards others, we are either disregarding or lacking an understanding of Yeshua’s words in the next two verses. He said: *14 “For if you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.”* (Matthew 6:14-15 TLV). Many of Yeshua’s followers have unforgiven sins, which remain because they have not forgiven others. This prevents Yeshua from forgiving us for our daily sins, which we regularly confess, believing we have been forgiven. Yeshua’s words are clear. Unless we forgive, ADONAI will not forgive. The *Shemittah* focuses our attention on forgiveness, and even though this is not a *Shemittah* year, it is the perfect time to clear our closets of unforgiveness. During *Rosh Hashanah*, ask ADONAI’s *Ruach* to show you if you have any lingering unforgiveness towards others in your life. If there is, forgiving will bring spiritual freedom and an opening to more excellent service to ADONAI and Yeshua. The importance of forgiveness is something that all of us in Yeshua’s body must come to understand and then, after understanding, actually make it a daily part of our confession of sin. If we don’t forgive, we have a hardness of heart. We all have these kinds of inner struggles. But we don’t have to give in to these deeply embedded thoughts, toxic thoughts, which rehearse the hurt or anger and reinforce it in our minds. The writer of Hebrews exhorts us: *8 do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness.* (Hebrews 3:8 TLV). We can be G-d’s people, even people who have trusted in Yeshua for forgiveness of their sins, and still be hard-hearted, refusing to forgive those who have offended us somehow. Without being people who are quick to forgive, we cannot be the body that Yeshua has called us to be.

Ten days from now we will be worshipping on *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement. Our special prayer on that day is for the salvation of all Israel. I don’t think that we can ever stop emphasizing this. It is a significant vision of Messianic Judaism but is also the future key to the salvation of multitudes of Gentiles. *Sha’ul* wrote: *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; 26 and in this way all Israel will be saved,.. (Romans 11:25-26a). We are nearing that day when the fullness of Gentiles will suddenly arrive. But “the fullness of the Gentiles” does not mean no more Gentiles will be saved after that day. In fact, it may be “the salvation of all Israel” that is the catalyst that will subsequently bring about the salvation of multitudes more Gentiles. (Zechariah 8). *Sha’ul* goes on to say: 26 ..., “*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 11:26b-27 TLV). The question is asked: 7 *Who will give salvation for Israel out of Zion?* (Psalm 53:7a TLV). The answer is Yeshua, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah 5 *Then one of the elders tells me, “Stop weeping! Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed—He is worthy to open the scroll and its seven seals.”* (Revelation 5:5 TLV). It is Yeshua, the star and scepter prophesied by Balaam the prophet 17 “.....*For a star will come from Jacob, a scepter will arise from Israel.*” (Numbers 24:17b). He is the “deliverer out of Zion.” *Sha’ul* continues: 28 *Concerning the Good News, they are hostile for your sake; but concerning chosenness, they are loved on account of the fathers — 29 for God's gifts and calling are irrevocable.* (Romans 11:28 TLV). Many Jews have been and are now hostile to Christians, Messianic Jews, and Messianic Gentiles. They don’t want to hear about the Gospel, for ADONAI has temporarily hardened their hearts, a hardening that can be individually overcome by listening to His *Ruach* speaking to their hearts. God’s calling of Abraham’s descendants as His chosen nation and His love for them has never changed; as *Sha’ul* said: “*the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable.*” ADONAI will soften their hardened hearts. He said: 27 “*And this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.*” (Romans 11:27 TLV). He will do it in a miraculous worldwide drawing by His Holy Spirit, and all Israel will be saved. This is a significant prophecy, the fulfillment of which will shortly lead to the return of Messiah Yeshua.

Hurricane Helene came through our area just a few days ago, and many of our communities are struggling with the aftermath. But those beyond our area were hit even harder. The destruction is beyond belief. As of now, it has been reported that more than 160 have lost their lives by Helene and, thousands are homeless, millions are without electricity. Flood waters cover many streets and are in homes, and homes and businesses have been destroyed. Interstates and highways are impassible. For several days before the storm’s arrival, we watched meteorologists present a track leading through Tallahassee and Thomasville. For some reason, the track changed and veered to the right, going through Perry and Valdosta for the third time in the last thirteen months. We are profoundly sorry for the suffering being experienced by so many. I don’t know about you, but seeing such terrible suffering, I have experienced “survivor’s guilt” after being spared from the destruction. I do not personally believe that where the hurricane went was in any way a judgment. ADONAI’s ways are not our ways, and we cannot understand why bad things happen to good people. Even though we are sad for those suffering, our response to ADONAI must be thanks for our deliverance. Father, I give you thanks for delivering me and my family and all of our *Beit Shalom mishpacha* from destruction and death. Thank you, thank you, thank you! We pray for those in distress. In gratefulness, we should individually contribute to disaster recovery efforts according to our ability.

We continue to pray without ceasing for our brothers and sisters in Israel as they continue to face the attacks of their enemies. There may be difficult days ahead as this world rebels against its Creator. But we are not to have a spirit of fear. Cast all your cares on Yeshua, for He cares for you. On this 1st day of the Hebrew month of *Tishrei* in the year

5785, pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6) and the salvation of all Israel. *Shana Tovah!* May this year be sweet and a year of personal spiritual growth for each of us.