



Rosh Hashana/Yom Teruah

October 3, 2024

Two thousand years ago Yeshua promised those held captive by the “god of this world,” *HaSatan*, “liberty.” Quoting Isaiah’s words (chapter 61), He said: 18 *“The Ruach Adonai is on me, because He has anointed me to proclaim Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, 19 and to proclaim the year of Adonai’s favor.”* (Luke 4:18-19 TLV). There is no spiritual vacuum. If you’re not in ADONAI’s kingdom, you are a part of *HaSatan*’s. There is only one way to achieve liberty: through the Kingdom of G-d. We set the stage for understanding these Scripture promises today by remembering the events as Yeshua’s ministry began. We begin at the Jordan River, where *Yochanan*, Yeshua’s cousin John, was immersing those who had come to repent of their sinful behavior. He cried: 2 *“Turn away from your sins, for the kingdom of heaven is near!”* (Matt. 3:2 TLV). What were the sins John was so upset about, and to whom was he speaking? The sins were the widespread violation of ADONAI’s law, *Torah*, committed by many of the Sadducees and Pharisees who had come to be immersed. These people, the priests and leaders of the Judaism of that day who were teaching righteousness were not themselves righteous. Their righteousness was unrighteousness, and *Yochanan* called out to them: 8 *“Therefore produce fruit worthy of repentance;..”* (Matthew 3:8 TLV). ADONAI’s teaching and instruction found in the Hebrew Scriptures were the law of the land of Israel, and by their violations, these leaders were sinning. The violation of ADONAI’s “teaching and instruction,” *Torah*, is, according to Yeshua’s disciple John, sin: 4 *“Everyone who keeps sinning is violating Torah — indeed, sin is violation of Torah.”* (1 John 3:4 CJB).

During this time, Yeshua came to the river for His cousin John to immerse Him. Recognizing Yeshua, John was reluctant to immerse him and said: 14 ..., *“I need to be immersed by You, and You are coming to me?”* (Matt. 3:14b TLV). But Yeshua said: 15 ..., *“Let it happen now, for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.”* (Matt. 3:15b TLV). John understood that Yeshua did not require repentance. In effect, he said, “I am the one who must repent and be immersed by you.” But Yeshua was there for a different purpose. It was necessary that He undergo the rites of that day’s Judaism to enter into His office and as the Scripture says, “do everything righteousness requires.”

Immersion, *tevillah* in Hebrew, and “baptism” in Greek was not something John invented. ADONAI instituted it while Israel was in the wilderness. It is not easy to understand this concept. The condition of ritual uncleanness, *tumah* in Hebrew, is sometimes referred to as spiritual impurity. It is not a physical thing but something spiritual that separates a person from the presence of ADONAI. We see it first in Leviticus 11:44, where ADONAI speaks about not having contact with unclean swarming animals and says, “Don’t make your souls, *nafshoteichem* in Hebrew, unclean.” We understand from this that *tevillah* has to do with the soul and not the body. That was why all of those coming to repent were repenting and being immersed. John’s immersion was an outward action representing inward and spiritual action, repentance, by those who came to him. Their immersion was very much like our repentance today. When followers of Yeshua sin, our sins separate us

from Him. When we repent, which we should do as soon as we recognize the sin, we are forgiven and return to a whole relationship with G-d. Yeshua made this clear in His statement following the Disciples' Prayer. He said that "unforgiveness damages our relationship with our Father in heaven: 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 of today are hampered by unforgiveness. All of us must forgive, or our effectiveness as followers of Yeshua will be diminished. The *tevillah* of Yochanan was only for repentance, but Yeshua requires those who follow Him today be immersed into His body, believer's immersion, a one-time event..

Yeshua did not need to be spiritually cleansed, but He did need to follow the prescribed method of being anointed to enter a new level of spirituality. Kings, scribes, rabbis, teachers, and others were all required to undergo *tevillah* to move into their new, higher-level office. *Tevillah* was also needed in Yeshua's day for worshippers before they could enter the Temple, an immersion to prepare their hearts to be in the presence of the Holy G-d. At the Jordan, Yeshua said to John, "*Let it be this way now, because we should do everything righteousness requires.*" Fulfilling all righteousness meant not only the requirements of the *Torah* but also the traditions of Israel. And, Yeshua was immersed and entered His ministry as *Mashiach*, the Anointed One of ADONAI.

1 Then Yeshua was led by the Ruach into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (Matt. 4:1 TLV). Yeshua's 40-day testing period in the wilderness may have been symbolic of the 40 years Israel spent there. After leaving Egypt, Israel was tested but failed the test and was given a 40-year sentence of wandering. After 40 years in the wilderness, ADONAI was satisfied when the first generation of people had died out, and the next generation of Israel was allowed to enter the Land. After 40 days of tempting Yeshua, the outcome was markedly different; *HaSatan* could not sway Him. Yeshua was successful where the Nation of Israel failed. This entity, the Adversary of ADONAI's kingdom, *HaSatan*, first revealed in Genesis chapter 3, has been the enemy of everything ADONAI has done on earth since. *HaSatan* was unsuccessful in his attempt to tempt Yeshua, but he continued to tempt the people of Yeshua's day until he was defeated and bound in the Abyss by Yeshua's death on the cross. He has since been released and is now actively working through a strong demonic network to deceive the nations today.

If we are going to be able to resist *HaSatan*, we must understand that he is only one individual, a fallen angel, a created being. But he has at his command many demonic entities who can torment and influence human beings and do the Adversary's work for him. We are frequently told in today's society that this is just a myth and that these things are caused by brain dysfunction and mental illness. Yeshua told the story differently as He encountered people tormented by demons during His ministry. His disciple *Sha'ul* further confirms their reality: *12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the worldly forces of this darkness, and against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.* (Ephesians 6:12 TLV). These rulers, the principalities and powers, are demonic angels of higher rank who follow *HaSatan's* direction. They like nothing better than for a follower of Yeshua to not believe in them. They can then have free reign to torment and damage unsuspecting human beings. In today's world this understanding becomes even more important for us.

After His wilderness experience Yeshua returned to the Galilee. (Story is in Luke 4). News went out about Yeshua and He began to teach in the synagogues of that region. He returned to His hometown of Nazareth and attended the synagogue on *Shabbat*. The custom then was as it is now, that certain men were given the honor of reading from the Scriptures. Today, as a part of our tradition, women can also receive the honor. Yeshua was given the honor of reading the *Haftarah*, which on that day was the prescribed prophetic reading from the scroll of Isaiah. Usually, the specific spot in the scroll is pointed out for the person to read from. Yeshua didn't read there but unrolled the scroll to a spot of His choosing: *17 When the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him, He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,..* (Luke 4:17 TLV). He turned to Isaiah 61 and read. The Hebrew of Isaiah 61:1-2 says: *1 The Ruach Adonai Elohim is on me, because Adonai has anointed me to proclaim Good News to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound, 2 to proclaim the year of Adonai's favor and the day of our God's vengeance, to comfort all who mourn,..* (Isaiah 61:1-2 TLV). But this is what Luke reports Yeshua read: *18 "The Ruach Adonai is on me, because He has anointed me to proclaim Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, 19 and to proclaim the year of Adonai's favor."* (Luke 4:18-19 TLV). Why are these words different than the Hebrew Isaiah? They are different because Yeshua left out "and the day of our G-d's vengeance" because that day was still far in the future. But His words were also different because Luke chose to use the Septuagint, the Greek language version of the *Tanakh*, translated about 200 years before by Jewish scholars in Egypt to quote Isaiah, and that was what Yeshua said. *Sha'ul* also used the Septuagint, sometimes called the LXX, extensively. It was widely accepted among Jews as an accurate representation of the *Torah* during that time. Yeshua essentially told the people of His home synagogue that "these words speak of Me." He said: "The Spirit of ADONAI is upon Me." But this was received with anger by the home-town folks, and they sought to kill Him. When Yeshua said: "*The Ruach ADONAI is on me*, He was referring to His anointing and His entry into His ministry through *tevillah*, immersion. As He emerged from the water, the *Ruach HaKodesh*, the Holy Spirit, descended as a dove upon Yeshua, and ADONAI spoke from heaven, saying: "*You are my Son, whom I love; I am well pleased with you.*" In this, we see the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The following phrase in Yeshua's statement to those gathered in the synagogue, "*because He has anointed me to proclaim Good News to the poor,*" proclaimed He had begun His ministry as Messiah. Then He said, *He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, 19 and to proclaim the year of ADONAI's favor*. This is a description of the ministry which He would be carrying out. Both physical and spiritual deliverance was now available, and not only physical healing but also spiritual release from satanic oppression. And Yeshua proclaimed the year of ADONAI's favor. The Messiah and His ministry was there, then. And He is here, now, in year 5785, a year of favor for us.

This day, *Yom Teruah*, the Festival of Trumpets, has been celebrated for centuries by the blowing of *shofarot*. The *shofar* brings to our mind *Sha'ul's* words in 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4. Had those in the Thessalonian congregation questioned *Sha'ul* about this? Possibly. He wrote: *13 Now we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, so that you may not grieve like the rest who have no hope.* (1 Thessalonians 4:13 TLV). They were concerned about the *Olam haba*, the world to come. Would they be counted worthy? He told them: *14 For if we believe that Yeshua died and rose*

again, so with Him God will also bring those who have fallen asleep in Yeshua. (1 Thessalonians 4:14 TLV). *Sha'ul* told them that if they believed Yeshua died and rose from the dead, ADONAI would also raise those who had died trusting in Yeshua. 15 *For this we tell you, by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord shall in no way precede those who are asleep.* (1 Thessalonians 4:15 TLV). Yeshua's living followers will rise following His dead. Concerning this, Yeshua had said: 25 *"He who loves his life will lose it, and the one who hates his life in this world will keep it forever. 26 If any man serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there also will My servant be. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him."* (John 12:25-26 TLV). Yeshua's servants will physically follow Him, rising to meet Him on the day the Father chooses. *Sha'ul*, who received his revelation directly from Yeshua (On the Damascus Road; Acts 9; Galatians 1:11-12) told them how it would happen. He said: 16 *For the Lord Himself shall come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the blast of God's shofar, and the dead in Messiah shall rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left behind, will be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air—and so we shall always be with the Lord.* (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 TLV). Through the spiritual pictures presented by ADONAI's festivals and shadows of things to come, *Yom Teruah* may be His picture of what we just read, the resurrection of the righteous dead followed by the catching up of the righteous living ones. We don't know when it might occur, but we do know that the signs of the times that Yeshua tells us about in Matthew 24 show us that His return is near. *Sha'ul* also wrote these words for Yeshua's faithful: <42 *So also is the resurrection of the dead: Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption! 43 Sown in dishonor, raised in glory! Sown in weakness, raised in power! 44 Sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body! If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.* (1 Corinthians 15:42-44 TLV). We will receive spiritual bodies, bodies very much like Yeshua's resurrection body. We believe this is imminent, on the horizon, and within the next few years.

In Matthew 24, Yeshua's disciples questioned Him, 3 ..., *"Tell us, when will these things happen? What will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?"* (Matthew 24:3b TLV). "The age" is the *Olam hazeh*, this world, which will end when Yeshua returns. When He physically returns to defeat His enemies, we will be in the *Olam habah*, the world to come. He gave them many signs that would occur right before His return, but what many of His modern followers don't understand is that He was talking to Jews in Jerusalem, a city in Israel, and that is the focus of His words. The signs primarily concern Israel and her enemies, which is what the entire Biblical story is about. It's about Abraham's descendants and ADONAI's plan to bless the nations of the earth through them. It's about Abraham's descendant Yeshua, the Lamb of G-d, who came to take away the sins of the world. And it's about the "One New Man," the Commonwealth of Israel of Jew and Gentile together, the followers of Yeshua. If we take the Scriptures out of their original setting and only see them from a "whole world viewpoint," we don't completely understand what ADONAI is telling us.

As said at the beginning of this message, there is no spiritual vacuum. You are either in ADONAI's kingdom or *HaSatan's* kingdom. There is no "spiritual limbo." *Sha'ul* wrote: 3 *And even if our Good News is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.* (2 Corinthians 4:3 TLV). ADONAI wants everyone to come to Him through His Son Yeshua, but to some, the Good News is being veiled, hidden. *Sha'ul* continued: 4 *In their case, the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, so they might not see the light of the Good News of the glory of Messiah, who is the image of God.* (2 Corinthians 4:4 TLV). The "god of this world" is *HaSatan*. He has blinded the minds of millions in this nation and millions around the

world who don't know Yeshua, including about 1.6 billion Muslims. For most of the non-believers in the world and most of the Muslims, this condition of being blinded is reversible. The fact that their minds are now blinded by *HaSatan* can change. We need to pray for them. Yeshua loves them and died for them.

As He entered into His ministry as *Mashiach*, the Anointed One of ADONAI, Son of David, Yeshua quoted from Isaiah's prophecy. Luke reported that Yeshua said: "*19 and to proclaim the year of Adonai's favor.*" (Luke 4:19 TLV). That year of favor is here today. May this year, 5785, be a powerful year for building up ADONAI's Kingdom. *HaSatan* is at work throughout the world, but no more anywhere than in the radical Islamists. We focus particularly on *Sha'ul's* advice regarding spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6, *12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood,...* and 1 Thessalonians 5:17, where he said: *17 pray constantly,* (TLV). We must teach ourselves to be continually praying throughout the day. We pray for the safety of all Jews and Yeshua's followers worldwide. That day in the Nazareth synagogue, there was a phrase in Isaiah 61 that Yeshua did not read. It was: *2 ... the day of our God's vengeance,...* (Isaiah 61:2b TLV). He skipped it, not reading it because it was not the time for "the Day of ADONAI," the day of His vengeance. "The day of His vengeance" is a prophecy for our day, a day which is drawing nearer and nearer; a day when Yeshua will return as *Melekh Mashiach ben David*, King Messiah Son of David, the conquering King and will put all His enemies under His feet. Today's *shofar* sound is a wake-up call for everyone in Yeshua's body. May that day, the great and awesome Day of ADONAI, be soon. Yeshua, we pray today: *10 Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* (Matthew 6:10 TLV). *L'shana tovah Mishpacha!*