



Erev Yom Kippur

October 11, 2024

Shalom Aleichem Mishpacha! The *Kol Nidre* Service is one of the most solemn services of the year, and we have had a Messianic observation of it annually since our first *Yom Kippur* as a congregation in 2002. Messianic Judaism is a contemporary movement that has revived ancient traditions, the observances of the 1st-century followers of Yeshua. The Modern Messianic Jewish Movement only began in the mid-1960s, but its spiritual principles are not new. It is a modern continuation of the movement which Yeshua began and His disciples carried forward.

In the 1st century there were a number of Jewish sects with five major ones. The Pharisees were a group that stressed obedience to God through *Torah* observance, Temple worship, synagogue worship, prayer, and charitable giving. Yeshua chastised some hypocritical Pharisees, but many were not hypocrites and were a voice that continually encouraged the people of Israel to make *teshuvah* and return to ADONAI. A group competing for leadership of the people was the Sadducees, a sect that grew out of Hellenistic Judaism and included most priests and the aristocrats of Jerusalem. They were politicians who supported the status quo of Roman occupation. Don't rock the boat was their mantra. This was understandable because the High Priest derived his authority from the Roman government, actually buying the office from them. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, an afterlife, or the soul's immortality. They were essentially a humanistic group in the clothing of ADONAI's followers. The Pharisees were much different. They believed in life after death, angels, and the coming resurrection of the dead. The Essenes were a group that had withdrawn from Temple worship and lived apart from mainstream Judaism. Their community was in Qumran by the Dead Sea. They are well known because of their preservation of many secular and religious scrolls that were rediscovered in modern times. A fourth group was the Zealots, not a religious group, but a group politically motivated to retake control of the nation from Rome. Some think that Yeshua's disciple *Yehudah*, Judas, was a member of that group. And finally, there were the Nazarenes, the followers of Yeshua. They were obedient to *Torah*, and to Temple worship as long as the Temple stood, continuing Temple worship after Yeshua died as ADONAI's sin sacrifice. They acknowledged Yeshua as the Messiah who was sent from G-d for the salvation of Israel. They believed in the immortality of the soul, resurrection of the dead, the afterlife, Temple worship, and angels, essentially the same as the Pharisees, who primarily differed in not believing Yeshua was *Mashiach*.

After 70 CE, and in the years following the destruction of the Temple, the Sadducees, the Essenes, and the Zealots disappeared completely. Without a Temple, there was no need for priests, and the Roman army essentially wiped out the Essenes and the Zealots. That left just two groups, the Pharisees and the Nazarenes. Following the destruction of the Temple, a group of Pharisees led by Rabbi *Yochanan Ben Zakkai*, developed a new worship form to take the place of Temple worship. In the place of the blood sacrifices commanded by ADONAI in Leviticus 17:11, they substituted a synagogue prayer service, which, over the years, grew into a complete belief system. The *Unetanah Tokef*, a confession composed hundreds of

years later and recited on *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, expresses the central thrust of this worship form. In part, it reads: “*U’teshuvah, U’tefillah, U’tzedakah ma’avirin et ro’ah ha’gezeyrah,*” meaning, “Repentance, prayer, and *tzedakah* (charitable giving) lessen the severity of the decree.” As things slowly returned to normal in Israel under their Roman oppressors, the two groups tolerated each other and sometimes even worshipped together in the same synagogues. But, as the end of the 1st century neared, tensions grew, and the followers of the group formed by *Rabbi Zakkai* sought a way to eliminate the Nazarenes from their synagogues. They did it by adding a new benediction to the *Shemoneh Esrei* Prayer. They added a 19th benediction to the ancient prayer, which was prayed daily in the synagogues. This new benediction was against those they called “heretics” and was directed at Yeshua’s followers, the Nazarenes. To be involved in this prayer in the synagogue would cause a follower of Yeshua to speak a curse upon himself. And because of this, joint worship gradually decreased. The final nail in the coffin of the relationship was early in the second century, during the second revolt against the Romans led by a man named *Bar Kosiba*, a ruthless guerilla leader who made his soldiers prove their worthiness by having a finger chopped off. There is some indication that the Nazarenes did join his army early on until something happened that they could not tolerate. The final separation of the two groups was caused when *Rabbi Akiva*, the chief spiritual leader of that day, declared *Bar Kosiba* to be the Messiah of Israel and gave him the name *Bar Kokhba*, meaning son of the star, a reference to Balaam’s prophecy in the Book of Numbers. After that, the Nazarene Jews withdrew from the revolt and worshipped apart from the Pharisaic Jews, and completely disappeared from the written record sometime in the 5th century. *Bar Kosiba*, meaning son of disappointment or son of the lie, was defeated by the Romans and died at their hand in 135 CE.

After the Temple was destroyed, most Jews followed the former Pharisees, who were becoming what we now call “Rabbinic Judaism.” However, the last Scriptural reference we have indicates that just a few years before the Temple was destroyed, there was also a very sizeable group of Messianic Jews in Judah. During *Sha’ul*’s fourth and last visit to Jerusalem in about 44 CE, *Ya’acov*, Jacob, and the elders in Jerusalem welcomed him to their group. After they heard his report about what G-d was doing among the Gentiles, they gave their report to him, saying: 20 “*You see, brother, how many myriads there are among the Jewish people who have believed—and they are all zealous for the Torah* (Acts 21:20b TLV). Myriads means tens of thousands. We don’t know how many tens of thousands of Messianic Jews there were. But, according to Acts 6:7, we also know that many priests were coming to faith in Yeshua. How many of these tens of thousands of followers of Yeshua died six years later when the Temple and Jerusalem were destroyed? Yeshua had told His disciples: 20 “*But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near. 21 Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those inside the city must get out, and those in the countryside must not enter her. 22 For these are the days of punishment, to fulfill all that has been written.*” (Luke 21:20-22 TLV). The “days of punishment” were “the Great Tribulation.” The Jewish historian Josephus reported that during that terrible event, more than a million Jews were either killed or taken away as slaves. Yeshua had said: 24 “*They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away captive into all the nations.*” (Luke 21:24a TLV).

Almost two thousand years have passed since these things happened, and Jews have remained separated into two basic camps: those who follow Yeshua and those who don’t. ADONAI gave the *She’midah* and the *Yovel*, the Seven-Year Release, and the Fifty-Year Jubilee as a means of restoration and redemption. The *Yovel* has not been observed in Israel since about 600 BCE. Is it a part of ADONAI’s plan to restore all things, including the salvation of

all Israel? Will ADONAI use this time of restoration to fulfill the prophetic purpose of *Yom Kippur*? When it takes place, the Jubilee year will be announced by *shofar* on *Yom Kippur*. *Torah* says: 8 “You are to count off seven *Shabbatot* of years—seven times seven years, so that the time is seven *Shabbatot* of years—49 years. 9 Then on the tenth day of the seventh month, on *Yom Kippur*, you are to sound a *shofar* blast—you are to sound the *shofar* all throughout your land. 10 You are to make the fiftieth year holy, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It is to be a Jubilee to you, when each of you is to return to his own property and each of you is to return to his family.” (Leviticus 25:8-10 TLV). In ancient Israel, it was sounded all throughout the Land to let everyone know it was *Yovel*, and each received what was due him according to the *Torah*. Will the *shofar* blown on a future *Yom Kippur* not be blown by a human but a heavenly one? The first heavenly *shofar* was blown at Mount Sinai when ADONAI gave the *Torah* to Israel. Will this heavenly *shofar* be the last, an announcement of ADONAI’s completion of all things?

There is another significance for *Yom Kippur*. The Day of Atonement is a type and shadow of a future day of fulfillment. We don’t know what will happen on that day and can only give a reasonable estimate based on our understanding of Scripture. We speak of the final judgment after ADONAI restores the Kingdom through King Yeshua. He will be our judge. Just before Yeshua’s ascension into heaven, His disciples asked Him: 6 ..., “Lord, are You restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?” (Acts 1:6b TLV). They meant: “When are you coming back to get us out of this terrible situation with the Romans?” Yeshua answered 7 ..., “It is not your place to know the times or seasons which the Father has placed under His own control.” (Acts 1:7 TLV). We don’t know when, but the prophets spoke of it. Joel saw this day and spoke of it in chapters 2 and 3. He wrote: 1 Blow the *shofar* in Zion! Sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all living in the land tremble—for the day of Adonai is coming—surely it is near! 2 A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, as blackness spreads over the mountains. A great and mighty people—from antiquity there was never anything like it, nor after it ever again from generation to generation. 3 A fire devours before them and behind them flame blazes up. Like the Garden of Eden is the land before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness. Nothing at all ever escapes them. (Joel 2:1-3 TLV). Isaiah saw it. He wrote 1 The *Ruach Adonai Elohim* is on me, (Isaiah 61:1a TLV) and continued: 2 to proclaim the year of Adonai’s favor and the day of our God’s vengeance, (Isaiah 61:2a TLV). The Day of our G-d’s vengeance, spoken of by Isaiah, and the Day of ADONAI, spoken of by Joel, are the same day. It is the day when Yeshua will return with heaven’s armies as *Melekh Mashiah*, King Messiah, Son of David, the conquering king, and defeat His enemies on the earth.

After that terrible day, both the righteous and the unrighteous must stand before the Judge. In the Scriptures, we see three judgments. The first is the judgment of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:31-36. The second is a judgment of believers’ works, often called the “judgment seat of Messiah” in 2 Corinthians 5:10. The third is called “the great white throne judgment” and described in Revelation 20:11-15. Some teach that these three are separate events, and some teach that all three are the same. But it is clear that every person, living and dead, will stand before Yeshua.

If *Yom Kippur* is a shadow of a future fulfillment by ADONAI, consider the possibility that all three events are different pictures of one and the same judgment that will occur after Yeshua has defeated His enemies. At the *shofar* sounding on the eve of *Yom Kippur* to signal the *Yovel*, the Jubilee, the battle is over, and now each must stand before King Yeshua, the righteous Judge. Just as the seventh year of *Sh’mittah* was a year of release, so too is the

fiftieth year of Yovel. That year of release has been described as a year of *Shabbatot*, a time of great *shalom*. Isaiah describes ADONAI's final victory: 8 *He will swallow up death forever. My Lord Adonai will wipe away tears from every face. He will remove His people's reproach from all the earth. For Adonai has spoken.* 9 *It will be said in that day: "Behold, this is our God, We waited for Him—He will save us. This is Adonai—we waited for Him. We will rejoice and be glad in His salvation."* 10 *For the hand of Adonai will rest on this mountain.* (Isaiah 25:8-10a TLV). Isaiah also prophesies 1 *In that day, this song will be sung in the land of Judah: "We have a strong city. He appoints salvation as its walls and ramparts. 2 Open the gates! Let the righteous nation enter— one that keeps faith. 3 You keep in perfect peace one whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. 4 Trust in Adonai forever, for the Lord Adonai is a Rock of ages.* (Isaiah 26:1-4 TLV). Verse 3 tells us that if our thoughts stay on ADONAI, He will keep us in perfect peace. This verse in the *Mechon Mamre* Hebrew Bible reads: יֵצֵר סְמוּדָה, תִּצְוֹר שְׁלוֹם שְׁלוֹם: כִּי יֵדָע, בְּטוֹחַ Yetzer samud, titzor shalom shalom: ki vedah, batucha. The doubling of the word *shalom*, peace, is how Hebrew adds the adjective "perfect" to a word, in this case, "perfect peace." If we trust in ADONAI and keep our minds "stayed" on Him, He will keep us in perfect peace. Do you want *shalom*? Isaiah tells us how we can have it. Keep focused on ADONAI and Yeshua!

Against the backdrop of the disastrous Second Jewish Revolt against Rome in 130 CE, early in the 2nd century, the two groups of Jews, Rabbinic and Messianic, had a final separation. Messianic Jews continued to exist as an organized group until sometime in the 5th century and then disappeared from history. Rabbinic Jews continued to exist from then to now but suffered great persecution from Gentiles through the years. But the day is coming when the persecution will end. ADONAI will end it, and Jewish suffering will end. The two-thousand-year break in the relationship between the two ancient streams of brothers, Rabbinic and Nazarene Jews, will be repaired and become one, One in *Mashiach Yeshua*. The fulfillment of ancient prophecies about Israel reveals that ADONAI's Word is true. It is a miracle of G-d that after almost two thousand years of being scattered throughout the nations, Israel is a nation again, and many Jews are now back in their ancient homeland. Would He make them a nation again and not deliver them from their enemies? No, He would not! He will deliver!

Tonight, on the eve of Yom Kippur, 5785, our prayer is for the salvation of all Israel. 26.....*"The Deliverer shall come out of Zion. He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. 27 And this is My covenant with them (Isaiah 59:20-21 LXX), when I take away their sins (Isaiah 27:9 LXX)"* (Romans 11:26b-27a TLV). Sha'ul was quoting from the Septuagint. 20 *"And the deliverer shall come for Sion's sake, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. 21 And this shall be my covenant with them, said the Lord; My Spirit which is upon thee, and the words which I have put in thy mouth, shall never fail from thy mouth, nor from the mouth of thy seed, for the Lord has spoken it, henceforth and forever."* (Esias 59:20-21 Online LXX). 9 *"Therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be taken away; and this is his blessing, when I shall have taken away his sin;"* (Esias 27:9a Online LXX). Isaiah also tells us 2 *It will come to pass in the last days that the mountain of Adonai's House will stand firm as head of the mountains and will be exalted above the hills. So all nations will flow to it. 3 Then many peoples will go and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of Adonai, to the House of the God of Jacob! Then He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths."* For Torah will go forth from Zion and the word of Adonai from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2-3 TLV). Yeshua will rule and reign from Jerusalem and teach us His Torah. Our heartfelt prayer is that that day will be soon. And we know we will all be one in Messiah "on that day." All Jews and Gentiles will love and serve the same Messiah, Yeshua. The next verse in Isaiah 2 speaks of Yom Kippur: 4 *He will judge*

between the nations and decide for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning knives. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, nor will they learn war any more. (Isaiah 2:4 TLV). To reach that day of judgment and victory, we are exhorted to walk in ADONAI's truth: 5 Come house of Jacob, let us walk in the light of Adonai (Isaiah 2:5 TLV). Our prayer on this Yom Kippur eve of 5785 is that we, those who follow Yeshua, and our Jewish brothers and sisters who do not, will soon walk together in the true light of ADONAI. Yom Tov!