



Parashiyot Nitzavim/Vayeilekh

September 5, 2026

Page |
1

Torah: Deuteronomy 29:9-31:30

Haftarah: Isaiah 61:10-63:9

Ketuvim Shlichim: Romans 11:11-24

Messianic Judaism 10

Shabbat shalom, Mishpacha! Last *Shabbat*, we had a prophetic look at the earth's final days revealed in Ezekiel 38 and 39. In the days ahead, a confederation of European, Middle Eastern, and North African nations (Gog and Magog) will unite to attack the Nation of Israel, but they will be defeated by ADONAI's mighty power through His Son, Yeshua, as revealed in Revelation 19. We don't know precisely where we are in ADONAI's timeline, but the re-establishment of the Nation of Israel in modern times reveals the season. Isaiah prophesied: *8 Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Can a land be born in one day? Can a nation be brought forth at once?* (Isaiah 66:8 TLV). Yes, and it was. The State of Israel was officially established when Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion proclaimed its independence in *Tel Aviv* on May 14, 1948, and his declaration began a mighty struggle for the incipient nation to remain sovereign.

Immediately attacked by an Arab confederation, Israel fought and won a war to retain a limited portion of its G-d-given land. The Arab-Israeli War lasted for about 14 months until a peace was brokered. Still, Israel held only a small portion of the land ADONAI promised until it launched a surprise air strike against the Egyptian Air Force and destroyed it on the ground. That was June 5, 1967, and over the next six days, Israel fought a multi-front war against Egypt, Jordan, and Syria and won. ADONAI gave them a miraculous victory. By the time a UN cease-fire took effect on June 10, Israel had control of the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. By conquering the Sinai Peninsula, Israel now had more land than it had during King David's time, but still far less than that ADONAI promised them: from the Wadi of Egypt to the Euphrates River.

According to Ezekiel 38, Israel will be living in peace when Gog and Magog attack. For that peace to occur, we must soon enter a period of calm. But Isaiah prophesied not only Israel's founding, but also her redemption. Just a few verses later in the same chapter, he wrote: *<15 For behold, Adonai will come in fire, and His chariots like the whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. 16 For by fire and His sword Adonai will execute judgment on all flesh, and those slain by Adonai will be many.* (Isaiah 66:15-16 TLV). This speaks of the Gog and Magog War, the final battle. That is what we expect in the coming years.

What will happen in Messiah Yeshua's Messianic Jewish Movement, ADONAI's modern re-creation of Yeshua's 1st-century movement? Our organization, the International Alliance of Messianic Congregations and Synagogues, a part of this movement, believes it is a prophetic movement. And I believe ADONAI is about to use Yeshua's Movement in a powerful, unprecedented way. Though largely unknown in today's Church, it will soon become increasingly vital as ADONAI intensifies His focus and shines more light on it. This is not to

say we compete with the Church. Both bodies have their own purpose and calling, and ADONAI uses them both.

But how will the Messianic Jewish Movement grow into a body that will influence the world? It will begin with many Gentiles coming to understand the Scriptures' context. The Messianic Jewish Movement is led by Jews, and I'm not suggesting that will change. Messianic Jewish congregations, and the overall movement, will continue to be led by Jews, albeit with a few Gentile leaders. But until all Israel is saved, the number of Jewish followers of Yeshua remains small, and the Movement must experience growth from somewhere. We must pray for more Messianic Jewish rabbis to come forth and for more Messianic Jewish congregations to be established. That will happen, but the major growth must come from elsewhere. Since the number of Gentiles in Messianic Judaism is much greater than the number of Jews, with estimates that 50 to 80% of the movement is Gentile, the number of Gentile members of Messianic Jewish congregations must also increase. But how? Right now, it doesn't seem possible, as things have been relatively stationary for a number of years.

The answer is that when ADONAI shines His light more brightly on Messianic Judaism, He will emphasize the context of His Word, and understanding the *Torah* will become the new focus. This new understanding will pierce the hearts of many Gentile followers of Yeshua, members of the Church, prompting many to turn to Messianic Judaism. The Scriptures must be read and understood in context- that is, in the understanding that reveals their true meaning- and that revelation is what will bring Gentiles into Messianic Judaism. The statement: "A text without a context is a pretext for a proof text" (attributed to D. A. Carson, quoting his father, Tom Carson) perfectly captures how understanding the *Torah* will come about. We must understand it not only as ADONAI presented it, with all its Jewish flavor, but also in the context in which it is presented. Right now, the Gentile group from which this growth will come follows a theology that often uses Scripture out of context. One verse widely quoted today is: 5 "*Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born, I set you apart— I appointed you prophet to the nations.*" (Jeremiah 1:5 TLV). Today, this verse is most often used to refer to individual followers of Jesus, but ADONAI was actually speaking only to Jeremiah. I don't doubt that ADONAI knew each of us before we were born and set us apart for our individual purposes, but He didn't appoint all of us as prophets. Some He did, and some He didn't. This usage is out of context because these words are addressed to Jeremiah and, in context, refer only to him. But we have studied the Bible and know context matters. We also know it is not antinomian (against keeping the *Torah*). Accordingly, we must read it with the understanding that the *Torah* has not been abolished and remains valid today, but is applied only in its proper context. There are different layers of interpretation, verses that have an immediate and a future understanding. However, context is different. If you look at a verse by itself without checking the surrounding paragraphs, you can twist it to mean almost anything you want by taking this single line away from the author's real message and forgetting who wrote the words, who they were talking to, and why they wrote them. Taking a verse out of context is using the isolated line to prove a point the original writer never intended.

Who will ADONAI use to reveal the correct context of His Word? ADONAI is already using someone, but the understanding of what he taught has been altered to the point that his words are now interpreted as antinomian. ADONAI will use *Sha'ul*, who wrote about 25% of the *Ketuvim Shlichim* (the writings of the Apostles) to bring about this pronomian revolution. In context, his writings are clearly pronomian, attesting to the *Torah's* validity. In coming days, ADONAI will illuminate *Sha'ul's* words in their correct context, causing more and more Gentiles to turn to Messianic Judaism. He wrote: 11 *I say then, they (Israel) did*

not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their false step salvation has come to the Gentiles, to provoke Israel to jealousy. (Romans 11:11 TLV). That has always been the sixty-four-dollar question. How are the Gentiles going to provoke Israel to jealousy? It hasn't happened in two thousand years, but it will, and I will tell you how. It will be through the flood of Gentiles who will come to Messianic Judaism, a virtual swarm, who learn the true context of *Sha'ul's* words about the *Torah* and then become faithful to it. This great number of *Torah*-following Gentiles will provoke Israel to jealousy. It doesn't seem likely now, but through ADONAI's approaching focus on the truth of the *Torah* and its correct context as revealed through *Sha'ul*, these things will come to pass.

We Gentiles in the Messianic Jewish Movement must also seek to understand how *Sha'ul* felt about his non-believing Jewish brothers and sisters' lack of salvation, and, for that matter, how most modern Messianic Jews similarly long for their salvation. *Sha'ul* wrote: *13 But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Insofar as I am an emissary to the Gentiles, I spotlight my ministry 14 if somehow I might provoke to jealousy my own flesh and blood and save some of them.* (Romans 11:13-14 TLV). He entreated Gentiles to understand his heart for the salvation of his Jewish brothers and sisters and also to share his desire for Jews to be saved. And we do, to the extent that each of us can from our view as Messianic Gentiles. But we cannot understand it to the extent *Sha'ul* did as a Jew: *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). *Sha'ul* would have given up his own salvation for the sake of his flesh and blood. As Gentile followers of Yeshua, we must have some of *Sha'ul's* intensity for the salvation of the Jews, because that is the heart feeling ADONAI wants us to have. Don't get me wrong. I'm not suggesting that we Gentiles have any role other than supporting the leadership. The Messianic Jewish Movement is led by Jews because that's how ADONAI ordained it, and we, the Gentile members, are here to support what G-d has ordained. But it will be through the growing number of Gentiles who will keep the *Torah* in the coming years that Israel will finally be provoked to jealousy, and *Sha'ul's* words will come to pass: *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, as it is written, “The Deliverer shall come out of Zion. He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.* (Romans 11:25-26 TLV). Gentiles will provoke Israel to jealousy, a first step toward their salvation, but it will be ADONAI's sovereign power that finally brings “all Israel” to the knowledge of Yeshua HaMashiach. As Isaiah wrote in the Septuagint, ADONAI will do it: “He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob” (Isaiah 59:20). ADONAI will use *Sha'ul* through a correct understanding of his writings, which are pronomian in character, that is, upholding the Law's validity today, rather than antinomian, the view that the Law is no longer valid. That is what you have already understood as we studied *Sha'ul's* letters, but many others will come to that understanding as well.

Additionally, we must also seek to understand *Sha'ul*, the man. Who was he, and how did he think? He wrote to the Roman congregation: *5 Through Him (Yeshua) we (Sha'ul) have received grace and the office of emissary, to bring about obedience of faith among all the nations on behalf of His name.* (Romans 1:5 TLV). He was appointed to the office of emissary to bring about faithful obedience to the *Torah* to the Gentiles. As an emissary, he spoke primarily to the Gentiles. *13 But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles.* (Romans 11:13a TLV). He expressed a similar thought to the Ephesian congregation: *1 For this reason I, Paul, am a prisoner of Messiah Yeshua for the sake of you Gentiles.* (Ephesians 3:1 TLV). And

speaking to the Galatians, he said: *7 On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the Good News for the uncircumcised just as Peter was for the circumcised.* (Galatians 2:7 TLV). His primary purpose as an emissary was to teach the Gentiles about the *Torah* to provoke Jews to jealousy, leading to their salvation, something that took two thousand years to develop. But it will happen soon. Emissary is translated from the Greek *apostolos* (ap-os'-tol-os), also rendered as apostle, messenger, or envoy, a “sent one.” Its Hebrew equivalent is *shaliach* (plural, *shlichim*). *Sha’ul* also tells who sent him to the Gentiles: *8 This favor was given to me, the very least of His kedoshim, to proclaim to the Gentiles the endless riches of the Messiah,....* (Ephesians 3:8 TLV). Yeshua sent him to the Gentiles. Our primary objective in studying *Sha’ul* is to determine, in its true context, what He was sent to proclaim to the Gentiles, so that we can present it today through the lens of Messianic Judaism.

Next, a look at *Sha’ul*, the man. Yeshua died on the cross for our sins on Passover in the year 30 CE. Forty days later, the *Ruach HaKodesh* fell upon *Shimon Kefa* and the others while they were gathered on the Temple Mount for *Shavuot*. Three thousand men and women from all over the known world responded to *Kefa*’s message, trusted in Yeshua, and were “immersed in the name of Messiah *Yeshua* for the removal of their sins” (Acts 2:38). On that day, the Body of Messiah consisted of just over three thousand souls, all of them Jews. Within their group were some Gentiles by birth, as Acts 2:11 tells us, who were proselytes, or converts to Judaism. In those days, after converting to Judaism, Gentiles were considered Jews, so the body was entirely Jewish.

Acts 2 continues: *44 And all who believed were together, having everything in common. 45 They began selling their property and possessions and sharing them with all, as any had need.* (Acts 2:44-45 TLV). This continued for several years, and when the group grew larger and needed more help, the elders chose seven men “to attend” to the people’s needs. “To attend,” or “to minister to,” is translated from the Greek *diakonein* (dee-ak-on-een). Its English translation is deacon, and its Hebrew counterpart is *shamash* (plural, *shamashim*). The disciples chose Stephen to be one of them. After being falsely accused of blasphemy, he was stoned to death, and this is where we first meet *Sha’ul*: *58 Driving him (Stephen) out of the city, they began stoning him, and the witnesses laid down their cloaks at the feet of a young man named Saul.* (Acts 7:58 TLV). The name Saul is transliterated from the Greek *Saulos* (sow'-los). Strong’s Online Concordance states that it derives from the Hebrew שְׂאֵל *Sha’ul*, meaning “asked for” or “prayed for.” Jewish boys receive their Hebrew name at their *B’rit Milah* (Covenant of Circumcision), but they also receive a name in their country’s language. *Sha’ul* was a Roman citizen, and the name *Saulos* was used in Latin and Greek and translates into English as Saul. The importance of Hebrew names is evident throughout the *Tanakh*, and the name *Sha’ul*, meaning “asked for” or “prayed for,” may have been given to him by his parents at ADONAI’s inspiration in preparation for Yeshua’s calling of him, “asking for him.”

When he is first seen, *Sha’ul* clearly aligns himself with Stephen’s persecutors: *1 Now Saul was in agreement with Stephen’s execution. On that day a great persecution arose against Messiah’s community in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the region of Judea and Samaria, except the emissaries.* (Acts 8:1 TLV). *Sha’ul* was also involved in the persecution described in Acts 8, going from house to house and dragging men and women into prison. Since the Scriptures give no dates, we find several different estimates of when these things happened. We will begin with *Sha’ul*’s and Cornelius’s conversions to get an idea of the passage of time since the *Shavuot* when the *Ruach HaKodesh* was poured out. Most theologians place both their conversions somewhere between the year 30, the year Yeshua died on the cross, and the year 40. *Sha’ul*’s Damascus Road encounter with Yeshua is usually dated to around 35 CE (Acts 9), and Cornelius’s conversion, about two years later,

to 37 CE (Acts 10). This means that for the first seven years after Yeshua died, His only followers in Israel were Jews, either by birth or as Gentile proselytes to Judaism, with Cornelius and his household becoming the first strictly Gentile followers of Yeshua.

The next event was *Sha'ul's* conversion, and at the time, he was still violently persecuting Yeshua's followers: *1 Now Saul, still breathing out threats and murder against the Lord's disciples, went to the kohen gadol. 2 He requested letters of introduction from him to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any men or women belonging to the Way, he might bring them as prisoners to Jerusalem.* (Acts 9:1-2 TLV). He was so rabid in his actions that he obtained letters of introduction to the synagogues in Damascus, letters that would allow him to go among its attendees, to see if any were Yeshua's Jewish followers, and then arrest them. *Sha'ul* was now on his way to arrest followers of Yeshua in Damascus, but instead, he met the very G-d he fought against: *3 As he was traveling, approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. 4 Falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" 5 "Who are You, Lord?" Saul said. "I am Yeshua—whom you are persecuting.* (Acts 9:3-5 TLV). His encounter with his Messiah completely changed him. From that point on, *Sha'ul* wholeheartedly served Yeshua. Then, about two years later in 37 CE, Cornelius and his household were saved, and the door was opened for ADONAI's original plan, which He revealed to Abraham: *8 The Scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, proclaimed the Good News to Abraham in advance, saying, "All the nations shall be blessed (receive salvation) through you."* (Galatians 3:8 TLV). The Blessing of Abraham is "Gentile salvation," and Cornelius was the first of many Gentiles to receive this blessing.

After meeting Yeshua, and while in Damascus, *Sha'ul* boldly proclaimed Yeshua to the Hellenists (Greek-speaking Jews), which caused them to try to kill him. After the disciples smuggled him out of the city at night, he went to Jerusalem and met with the elders. When he was again in danger from the Hellenists there, the brothers sent him to Tarsus, where Barnabas later found him and brought him to Antioch. *25 Then Barnabas left for Tarsus to look for Saul, 26, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year, they met together with Messiah's community and taught a large number. Now, it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called "Christianoi" (khris-tee-ah-NOY) (Acts 11:25-26 TLV). Christianoi means "belonging to or a follower of Christ," the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *Mashiach* and the English Messiah. The English translation "Christian" carried no doctrinal intent at this time, because traditional Christianity was still several hundred years from its formation. At that time, it simply referred to those who followed Jesus, the Christ.*

As we begin to consider *Sha'ul* as a follower of the *Torah*, the Gospels demonstrate that Yeshua also upheld the *Torah*: *17 "Do not think that I came to abolish the Torah or the Prophets! I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. 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 5:17-18 TLV). Yeshua's early followers also adhered to this understanding, as evidenced throughout the rest of the *Ketuvim Shlichim*, especially as shown in the Book of Acts. As Yeshua's "apostle to the Gentiles," understanding *Sha'ul's* words is the key to understanding that he did not teach against the *Torah*. He was not an antinomian. Some today even believe and teach that Paul began a completely new and different religion, something traditional Christianity doesn't believe. They do interpret his writings with an antinomian mindset, believing that obeying the Law has been done away with. In their interpretation, Paul, the Apostle, is against keeping "the Law." But *Sha'ul*, the Jewish *Shaliach* (sent one; apostle), must be interpreted through a pronomian lens. We also see the same mindset among all of Yeshua's early disciples and in our own minds as Messianic Jews

and Gentiles today, agreeing that the *Torah* is to be obeyed. *Sha'ul*, as we will see, is strongly pronomian and strongly in favor of keeping *Ho Nomos*, “the Law.” This is not a criticism of those who interpret Paul as antinomian. We all see through a glass darkly. (1Corinthians 13:9 & 12). We may not all agree on the way to understand Scripture, but as followers of Yeshua, Jesus, we all seek the truth and are called to do so in love. We studied Matthew 16 earlier, which shows that Yeshua has given all His followers, both Christian and Messianic, the authority to interpret Scripture. Yeshua allows each group to develop its own understanding of Scripture, but each of us will ultimately have to stand before His judgment seat and explain our actions.

Next time, to better understand *Sha'ul's* mindset, we will continue examining his background. As we learn more about him and study his writings, we come to understand unequivocally that he was a fervent follower of the *Torah* and that he also conveyed the same message to the Gentiles. Certainly, the 1st-century Gentiles understood it, and those of us in Messianic Judaism today do, too. But most of Yeshua's followers have largely lost this understanding for two thousand years, and it will soon be restored. This is not a time to be discouraged but to press into the Movement to which we've been called. The *Torah* righteousness of the coming multitudes of Gentiles will be the first step toward the salvation of all Israel, their jealousy. For that to happen, we Gentiles must be as fervent as *Sha'ul* was and as Messianic Judean Jews were when he arrived in Jerusalem for the last time: 20 *They (Yeshua's disciples in Jerusalem) said, "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: the number of zealous Messianic Jews in Judea shortly before the Temple's destruction. Pray that ADONAI's expansion of the modern Messianic Jewish Movement will come soon, and that there will be myriads of Messianic Gentiles "zealous for the Torah."* Then Israel will become jealous and draw near to their salvation. *Sha'ul's* purpose was to instruct Gentiles in the *Torah*. As Messianic Gentiles, our purpose is to take to heart the lessons he taught us and make his brothers and sisters jealous by how we love and obey the *Torah*. May that day come soon! *Shabbat shalom!*