

Notes: September 20, 2014

Start: 10 AM

Order of service:

1. Meet and Greet
2. Introduction (if new people)
3. Ma Tovv
4. Open in Prayer for service
5. Liturgy – Sh'ma +
6. Announcements
7. Praise and Worship Songs
8. Message
9. Aaronic Blessing
10. Kiddush
11. Oneg

Children's Blessing:

Introduction: The Month of Elul – Preparation Leads to Messiah

As believers, we tend to get lax or even lazy the longer we are believers.

Some might say we have short attention spans and are always wanting something new and exciting, like when we first became believers in Messiah.

As we are approaching the midway point of the month of Elul, I need to convey a dynamic that is found within Jewish culture that should be part of a believers tool box.

The month of Elul is a time of preparation, a time of forgiving and seeking forgiveness with the intent of coming before Adonai on Yom Kippur.

- The name of the month (spelled [Alef-Lamed-Vav-Lamed](#)) is said to be an acronym of "Ani l'dodi v'dodi li," "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine," a quote from Song of Songs 6:3, where the Beloved is [G-d](#) and the "I" is the [Jewish people](#).
- In Aramaic the word "Elul" means "search," which is appropriate, because this is a time of year when we search our hearts.

For the entire month, devout Jewish people begin a time of introspection and prayer leading up to Yom Kippur.

Elul is also a time to begin the process of asking forgiveness for wrongs done to other people. According to Jewish tradition, God cannot forgive us for sins committed against another person until we have first obtained forgiveness from the person we have wronged. This is not as easy a task as you might think, if you have never done it.

To give you an idea of the impact and validity of this month, many people visit cemeteries because the awe-inspiring nature of this time makes us think about life and death and our own mortality

An entire month!!!

In this week's Parashah – Nitzavim (Standing) I found it appropriate in that during the month of Elul, a time of preparation leading to Yom Kippur with a culmination of this Holy season being Sukkot, that Deuteronomy 30 speaks of a regathering of Israel...

We are coming into a season that concludes a cycle, only to begin another cycle.

Adonai created cycles within time to provide a marker so that when He says He will do something or promises that something will happen, we are able to keep track.

Gen 1:14 God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to divide the day from the night; let them be for signs, seasons, days and years;

We count the cycles of the moon to determine when the current year (cycle) is complete and when a new year begins.

Within larger cycles are smaller cycles...

If our lifetime is considered to be one cycle, we might consider it like a book. A book is a completed cycle of chapters.

Chapters are a completed cycle of paragraphs

Paragraphs are a completed cycle of sentences

Sentences are a completed cycle of words

Words are a completed cycle of letters.

However, our lifetime, a completed cycle, is but mere letters, comprising our name in Adonai's final book of life, based on our completed work, if it includes Yeshua.

Adonai expressed through Solomon this very dynamic in Ecclesiastes 3:

Ecc 3:1 For everything there is a season, a right time for every intention under heaven —

What is to follow verse one is what Solomon expresses as times within a season, with a season being a cycle within a larger cycle and comprising many smaller cycles...concluding with a question...

Ecc 3:9 What does the worker gain from his efforts?

Followed by a statement and an answer as to “what's in it for me?”

Ecc 3:10 I have seen the task God has given humanity to keep us occupied.

Ecc 3:11 He has made everything suited to its time; also, he has given human beings an awareness of eternity; but in such a way that they can't fully comprehend, from beginning to end, the things God does.

As believers, we are hopefully well aware eternity, however, being confined in time cannot fully comprehend it. Yet what we witness at this time of year, each year brings us that much closer to the return of Yeshua.

To the point regarding the 12 Principle of Faith according to Maimonides:

“I believe with complete faith in the coming of Mashiach. Though He tarry, nonetheless I await Him every day, that He will come”

We are seeking this happen before our eyes...

This cycle (year) is coming to a close.

During Elul, we spend time reflecting, so that when the shofar sounds, warning us that Yom Kippur is at hand, we are not taken by surprise.

Deu 30:1 "When the time arrives that all these things have come upon you, both the blessing and the curse which I have presented to you; and you are there among the nations to which Adonai your God has driven you; then, at last, you will start thinking about what has happened to you;

Deu 30:2 and you will return to Adonai your God and pay attention to what he has said, which will be exactly what I am ordering you to do today - you and your children, with all your heart and all your being.

Deu 30:3 At that point, Adonai your God will reverse your exile and show you mercy; he will return and gather you from all the peoples to which Adonai your God scattered you.

We are seeing Alyiah being made to where Israel is receiving her people back in droves.

Deu 30:4 If one of yours was scattered to the far end of the sky, Adonai your God will gather you even from there; he will go there and get you.

Deu 30:5 Adonai your God will bring you back into the land your ancestors possessed, and you will possess it; he will make you prosper there, and you will become even more numerous than your ancestors.

It doesn't matter where, they are returning from the most distant places, to which Adonai is orchestrating this regathering.

A season of preparation is at hand.

When the statement is made either by Jews who don't believe in Yeshua or by those who attempt to discredit the validity of Israel today, due to the vast majority of people in the land who are not following Messiah, they are missing the point of order that Adonai is executing His regathering...

Deu 30:6 Then Adonai your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your children, so that you will love Adonai your God with all your heart and all your being, and thus you will live.

This verse can only mean one thing – it referring to the New Covenant promise.

In Deuteronomy 10:16, Moshe warns the people that they need to circumcise their own hearts and not to be stiffnecked any longer.

However, we do not have the capacity to circumcise our own hearts. Notice here that it is Adonai who does the circumcision, just as it is conveyed by the Prophets...

Eze 36:26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit inside you; I will take the stony heart out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

Jer 31:33 (31:32) "For this is the covenant I will make with the house of Isra'el after those days," says Adonai: "I will put my Torah within them and write it on their hearts; I will be their God, and they will be my people.

He is gathering them to the land, and then He will circumcise their heart, speaking of Sha'ul's reference to "all Israel will be saved"

This final circumcision will occur during Rosh Hashanah, when the last shofar sounds in Jerusalem on that day,

coinciding with the Seventh Trumpet of Adonai in Revelation 11.

But, He is preparing a remnant, circumcising hearts that will prepare and guide the masses back to Adonai.

Deu 30:7 Adonai your God will put all these curses on your enemies, on those who hated and persecuted you;

Deu 30:8 but you will return and pay attention to what Adonai says and obey all his mitzvot which I am giving you today.

We see this promise seen in a future where all nations will come to Jerusalem and worship the King of Israel, not to mention a curse should they not come...

Zec 14:16 Finally, everyone remaining from all the nations that came to attack Yerushalayim will go up every year to worship the king, Adonai-Tzva'ot, and to keep the festival of Sukkot.

Zec 14:17 If any of the families of the earth does not go up to Yerushalayim to worship the king, Adonai-Tzva'ot, no rain will fall on them.

Deu 30:9 Then Adonai your God will give you more than enough in everything you set out to do - the fruit of your body, the fruit of your livestock, and the fruit of your land will all do well; for Adonai will once again rejoice to see you do well, just as he rejoiced in your ancestors.

Deu 30:10 "However, all this will happen only if you pay attention to what Adonai your God says, so that you obey his mitzvot and regulations which are written in this book of the Torah, if you turn to Adonai your God with all your heart and all your being.

Deu 30:11 For this mitzvah which I am giving you today is not too hard for you, it is not beyond your reach.

Not too hard or beyond your reach...

Yeshua conveys the same message:

Mat 11:28 "Come to me, all of you who are struggling and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Mat 11:29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Mat 11:30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Torah written on a circumcised heart is neither hard nor complicated.

It isn't beyond our reach...

Mat 3:2 "Turn from your sins to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near!"

Mat 4:17 From that time on, Yeshua began proclaiming, "Turn from your sins to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near!"

David Stern makes this comment in relation to verse Matthew 3:2

In both Yochanan's and Yeshua's preaching ([Mat 4:17](#)) the reason for urgency to repent is that **the Kingdom of Heaven is near**. The concept of the Kingdom of God is crucial to understanding the Bible. It refers neither to a place nor to a time, but to a condition in which the rulership of God is acknowledged by humankind, a condition in which God's promises of a restored universe free from sin and death are, or begin to be, fulfilled. A condition that can not be met without a circumcised heart.

Deu 30:12 It isn't in the sky, so that you need to ask, 'Who will go up into the sky for us, bring it to us and make us hear it, so that we can obey it?'

Deu 30:13 Likewise, it isn't beyond the sea, so that you need to ask, 'Who will cross the sea for us, bring it to us and make us hear it, so that we can obey it?'

Deu 30:14 On the contrary, the word is very close to you - in your mouth, even in your heart; therefore, you can do it!

Deu 30:15 "Look! I am presenting you today with, on the one hand, life and good; and on the other, death and evil -

Deu 30:16 in that I am ordering you today to love Adonai your God, to follow his ways, and to obey his mitzvot, regulations and rulings ; for if you do, you will live and increase your numbers; and Adonai your God will bless you in the land you are entering in order to take possession of it.

This was a message for the current generation that Moshe was speaking to.

But it was also a message for future generations.

You have the opportunity to choose.

You are not being forced.

However when everything is laid out on the table, the good and bad, which would you choose.

If you have a circumcised heart would you not follow the one who circumcised it?

Elul is a time that we prepare for a season of repentance. Yes we have the availability to repent at any time.

Our society is in a constant state of urgency. This urgency has affected congregations...

“if the pastor goes past noon, we are leaving...we have things to do.”

To the point where some congregations have responded...**(slide show)**

However, when you put it on the calendar, just like an appointment, it becomes more structured – a commitment, rather than something you do in passing by.

Adonai desires our attention, undivided, rather than an afterthought.

To use a sports metaphor, If Rosh Hashanah is the 2 minute warning before Yom Kippur, then Elul is the beginning of the fourth quarter.

You know what the current situation is and you know how much time you have remaining to chip away at your opponent's lead.

If you are unable to make any headway from the start of the fourth quarter to the final two minutes, then you need to reassess your strategy and modify your approach based on the amount of time you have remaining. There becomes a greater urgency.

When you reach the final 2 minutes, you now have to reassess your situation, and go into a hurry up mode.

Let us come into this season with repentant hearts and consider the last verses of Deuteronomy 30

A final warning...

Deu 30:17 But if your heart turns away, if you refuse to listen, if you are drawn away to prostrate yourselves before other gods and serve them;

Deu 30:18 I am announcing to you today that you will certainly perish; you will not live long in the land you are crossing the Yarden to enter and possess.

A final plea...

Deu 30:19 "I call on heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have presented you with life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore, choose life, so that you will live, you and your descendants,

Deu 30:20 loving Adonai your God, paying attention to what he says and clinging to him - for that is the purpose of your life! On this depends the length of time you will live in the land Adonai swore he would give to your ancestors Avraham, Yitz'chak and Ya`akov."