

Notes: August 15, 2015

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:

Transliteration: *Ye'simcha Elohim ke-Ephraim ve hee-Menashe*

English: *May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe*

Transliteration: *Ye'simech Elohim ke-Sarah, Rivka, Rachel ve-Leah.*

English: *May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.*

Introduction: Preparing for Elul

As we approach Rosh Hashanah, the New Year, there will likely be a heighten interest in the Shemitah...

The sabbath year (**shmita** Hebrew: שמיטה, literally "release") also called the sabbatical year or sheviit (Hebrew: שביעית, literally "seventh") is the seventh year of the seven-year agricultural cycle mandated by the Torah for the Land of Israel, and still observed in contemporary Judaism.

Yet many will be focused on other things...

What will happen in America and around the world as the Shemitah draws to a close on Elul 29?

This focus is heightened as many are now paying attention to a time that would have otherwise not have received any attention outside of the Israel and Jewish communities around the world thanks primarily to Jonathan Cahn's books and DVDs.

Yet I don't want you to loose focus of what this time is meant to be.

While many will focus on a time of pending financial collapse or an outbreak of war, there is something more important that we should be focusing on...

T'shuvah

We have no idea what events may or may not transpire on Elul 29. Anxiety is caused by worrying about something that hasn't happened yet or will never happen. We are not to live in fear of this world, or what will transpire. Yeshua says to us...

**Joh 16:32** But a time is coming — indeed it has come already — when you will be scattered, each one looking out for himself; and you will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone; because the Father is with me.

**Joh 16:33** "I have said these things to you so that, united with me, you may have shalom. In the world, you have tsuris. But be brave! I have conquered the world!"

Preparing them for a time when it will appear uncertain. When in His absence their world will be turned upside down. Yet so long as they stay focused on Him they will have shalom, they will have peace.

So, let's spend a few minutes on the Shemitah and then focus on what we need to focus on.

So, this Shemitah, how certain are we that it is a Shemitah?

The year is 5775, when divided by 7 produces a whole number (825) which means that there have been 825 seven year cycles since the beginning of creation. This number of years on the Jewish calendar represents the number of years since creation as referenced in Genesis 5 and calculated by adding up the ages of people in the Bible back to the time of creation and subtracting the years that were in common.

So, first appearance looks good, we are in a year that is divisible by 7.

Some say this number can be off by as much as 200 years. So, when it comes to the actual year according to Adonai's time, only He truly knows.

However, Shemitah is an instruction that Adonai gave to Israel and is conditional...

**Lev 25:1** Adonai spoke to Moshe on Mount Sinai; he said,

**Lev 25:2** "Tell the people of Isra'el, 'When you enter the land I am giving you, the land itself is to observe a Shabbat rest for Adonai.

**Lev 25:3** Six years you will sow your field; six years you will prune your grapevines and gather their produce.

**Lev 25:4** But in the seventh year is to be a Shabbat of complete rest for the land, a Shabbat for Adonai; you will neither sow your field nor prune your grapevines.

**Lev 25:5** You are not to harvest what grows by itself from the seeds left by your previous harvest, and you are not to gather the grapes of your untended vine; it is to be a year of complete rest for the land.

**Lev 25:6** But what the land produces during the year of Shabbat will be food for all of you — you, your servant, your maid, your employee, anyone living near you,

**Lev 25:7** your livestock and the wild animals on your land; everything the land produces may be used for food.

It is conditional and connected to the land.

“when you enter the land I am giving you.”

The counting of years would begin when they would enter the land...Deuteronomy 26 conveys an additional nuance...

**Deu 26:1** "When you have come to the land Adonai your God is giving you as your inheritance, taken possession of it and settled there;

When you come into the land and taken possession.

Keep in mind Deuteronomy 26:1 is conveyed some 40 years later. In the Leviticus passage, there was no doubt at the time that Israel wouldn't take possession of it, yet 40 years later, it is emphasized because of the initial doubt, to where Adonai is conveying no doubt in them taking possession of the land.

So, the Shemitah is conditional on Israel, not only being in the land but being in control of the land.

So were there any Shemitah's while Israel was in exile?

The land was not cultivated while they were in exile, so it didn't produce. It laid barren.

The first exile was a result of not allowing the land to rest every 7 years

**Jer 25:11** This entire land will become a ruin, a waste; and these nations will serve the king of Bavel for seventy years.

**Jer 25:12** But when the seventy years are over, I will punish the king of Bavel and that nation for their sin,' says Adonai, 'and I will turn the land of the Kasdim into everlasting ruins.

**Eze 20:21** " 'But the children too rebelled against me. They did not live by my laws or observe my rulings, to obey them, which, if a person does, he will have life by them; and they profaned my shabbats. Then I said I would pour out my fury on them and spend my anger on them in the desert.

**Eze 20:22** Nevertheless, I withdrew my hand and allowed concern for my own reputation to keep me from letting it be profaned in the sight of the nations who had seen when I brought them out.

**2Ch 36:21** Thus was fulfilled the word of Adonai spoken by Yirmeyahu, "until the land has been paid her Shabbats" — for as long as it lay desolate, it kept Shabbat, until seventy years had passed.

Keep in mind that it wasn't just the land that was owed her Sabbaths but Adonai as well...

**Lev 25:2** "Tell the people of Isra'el, 'When you enter the land I am giving you, the land itself is to observe a Shabbat rest for Adonai.

What do you mean Adonai rested?

Who provided the increase to that which grew?

So if Israel isn't in the land, and the land isn't producing, there is no Shemitah.

So, when do we resume the counting of Sabbaths?

Some say it was 1948 when Israel became a nation again, yet Israel was partitioned. The year 1948 is 5708 on the Jewish calendar.

Since 1948, Israel has been living in the land 67 years. When dividing by 7 you get 9.57, not a Shemitah.

However, when you go to 1967, from June 7<sup>th</sup>, we are now in the 49<sup>th</sup> year of Israel living in the land. 1967 was 5726 on the Jewish calendar ( $5726 / 7 = 818$ )

Why 1967?

Keep in mind Deuteronomy 26:1 "when you take possession, meaning when you are in control of the land. The Jewish people were not fully in control of the land until 1967, when they recaptured Jerusalem in the 6 day war.

So, this is our Shemitah portion of the message. Whether I talk about it again between now and Rosh Hashanah is doubtful, but I do reserve the right if Adonai directs me otherwise.

Now back to the month of Elul...

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!!!

This is the instruction Adonai gave Moshe regarding the Shemitah, the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> year...

**Deu 31:10** Moshe gave them these orders: "At the end of every seven years, during the festival of Sukkot in the year of sh'mittah,

**Deu 31:11** when all Isra'el have come to appear in the presence of Adonai at the place he will choose, you are to read this Torah before all Isra'el, so that they can hear it.

**Deu 31:12** Assemble the people — the men, the women, the little ones and the foreigners you have in your towns — so that they can hear, learn, fear Adonai your God and take care to obey all the words of this Torah;

**Deu 31:13** and so that their children, who have not known, can hear and learn to fear Adonai your God, for as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Yarden to possess."

During the month of Elul, there are a number of special rituals leading up to the High Holy Days. One custom in traditional Judaism is to blow the shofar every morning (except on Shabbat) from Rosh Chodesh Elul (the first day of the month) until the day before Rosh Hashanah.

The blasts are meant to awaken one's spirits and inspire him to begin the soul searching which will prepare him for the High Holy Days.

As part of this preparation, Elul is the time to begin the sometimes-difficult process of granting and asking for forgiveness.

Keeping in mind that through Yeshua we can approach Him at any time we have transgressed, and seek forgiveness, but, when a time is incorporated into our lives that goes from Elul 1 until Tishrei 10 – Yom Kippur, Israel's Day of Atonement – 40 days, it makes for a stronger body of believers.

Yom Kippur will be the day when Israel as a nation will return to Adonai in accepting Yeshua as Messiah and thus make atonement for the nation, to where as Sha'ul writes in Romans 11...

**Rom 11:25** For, brothers, I want you to understand this truth which God formerly concealed but has now revealed, so that you won't imagine you know more than you actually do. It is that stoniness, to a degree, has come upon Isra'el, until the Gentile world enters in its fullness;

**Rom 11:26** and that it is in this way that all Isra'el will be saved. As the Tanakh says, "Out of Tziyon will come the Redeemer; he will turn away ungodliness from Ya`akov

**Rom 11:27** and this will be my covenant with them, . . . when I take away their sins."

Referencing Isaiah 59:20 – 21 and Jeremiah 31:34.

Therefore, let us put everything into perspective.

When you have placed something on the calendar as a "to do" item, you pay more attention to it. So, if you put a time of introspection on your calendar every day, you will be more apt to pay attention.

Encourage the Ruach ha Kodesh to assist you in pursuing Adonai. Don't allow any stone to be unturned. This is a time to restore relationships, seek forgiveness from others, and pursue Adonai's righteousness found through His Word.

Some will tell you that it is all found in Yeshua and all you have to do is have faith and believe.

**Rom 3:21** But now, quite apart from Torah, God's way of making people righteous in his sight has been made clear — although the Torah and the Prophets give their witness to it as well —

**Rom 3:22** and it is a righteousness that comes from God, through the faithfulness of Yeshua the Messiah, to all who continue trusting. For it makes no difference whether one is a Jew or a Gentile,

**Rom 3:23** since all have sinned and come short of earning God's praise.

Yet it is through Yeshua, whom lived blamelessly by Torah that He is deemed righteous. Therefore we are to put our trust in Him and His righteousness. We are to put our trust in what He says...

I had previously provided John 16:32 – 33 as Yeshua's words of encouragement involving worldly matters, yet it is in this same passage that He provides you with encouragement in Spiritual matters...

**Joh 16:7** But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I don't go away, the comforting Counselor will not come to you. However, if I do go, I will send him to you.

**Joh 16:8** "When he comes, he will show that the world is wrong about sin, about righteousness and about judgment —

**Joh 16:9** about sin, in that people don't put their trust in me;

**Joh 16:10** about righteousness, in that I am going to the Father and you will no longer see me;

**Joh 16:11** about judgment, in that the ruler of this world has been judged.

**Joh 16:12** "I still have many things to tell you, but you can't bear them now.

**Joh 16:13** However, when the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own initiative but will say only what he hears. He will also announce to you the events of the future.

**Joh 16:14** He will glorify me, because he will receive from what is mine and announce it to you.

**Joh 16:15** Everything the Father has is mine; this is why I said that he receives from what is mine and will announce it to you.

Everything the Father has belongs to Yeshua, so when He says...

**Joh 14:12** Yes, indeed! I tell you that whoever trusts in me will also do the works I do! Indeed, he will do greater ones, because I am going to the Father.

**Joh 14:13** In fact, whatever you ask for in my name, I will do; so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

**Joh 14:14** If you ask me for something in my name, I will do it.

**Joh 14:15** "If you love me, you will keep my commands;

**Joh 14:16** and I will ask the Father, and he will give you another comforting Counselor like me, the Spirit of Truth, to be with you forever.

The commandments Yeshua are referring to are no different than the Father's commandments in that they are one. Yeshua said they were not His words but the words of the one who sent Him. Likewise, the Ruach ha Kodesh, will not speak on his own initiative, but on what He hears from the one who sent Him.

So, during this time of Elul, we need to reflect upon our lives in relation to Adonai's Word.

It is also customary to recite Psalm 27 every day from Rosh Chodesh Elul through Hoshanah Rabbah during Sukkot (in Tishrei). This goes beyond Yom Kippur, because it isn't just seeking t'shuvah, but is conveying much more...

**Psa 27:1** [*By David.*] Adonai is my light and salvation; whom do I need to fear? Adonai is the stronghold of my life; of whom should I be afraid?

**Psa 27:2** When evildoers assailed me to devour my flesh, my adversaries and foes, they stumbled and fell.

**Psa 27:3** If an army encamps against me, my heart will not fear; if war breaks out against me, even then I will keep trusting.

**Psa 27:4** Just one thing have I asked of Adonai; only this will I seek: to live in the house of Adonai all the days of my life, to see the beauty of Adonai and visit in his temple.

**Psa 27:5** For he will conceal me in his shelter on the day of trouble, he will hide me in the folds of his tent, he will set me high on a rock.

**Psa 27:6** Then my head will be lifted up above my surrounding foes, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing, sing praises to Adonai.

**Psa 27:7** Listen, Adonai, to my voice when I cry; show favor to me; and answer me.

**Psa 27:8** "My heart said of you, 'Seek my face.' " Your face, Adonai, I will seek.

**Psa 27:9** Do not hide your face from me, don't turn your servant away in anger. You are my help; don't abandon me; don't leave me, God my savior.

**Psa 27:10** Even though my father and mother have left me, Adonai will care for me.

**Psa 27:11** Teach me your way, Adonai; lead me on a level path because of my enemies -

**Psa 27:12** don't give me up to the whims of my foes; for false witnesses have risen against me, also those who are breathing violence.

**Psa 27:13** If I hadn't believed that I would see Adonai's goodness in the land of the living, . . .

**Psa 27:14** Put your hope in Adonai, be strong, and let your heart take courage! Yes, put your hope in Adonai!