



Erev Rosh Hashana

September 15, 2023

Talmidim Shel Yeshua 5

Shalom aleichem Mishpacha! At sunset tonight, 7:40 PM here in Thomasville, it became the Hebrew year 5784. As we count each year, we become one year closer to the return of our “blessed hope.” *Sha’ul* wrote to Titus: *13 We wait for the blessed hope and appearance of the glory of our great God and Savior, Messiah Yeshua.* (Titus 2:13 TLV). That’s what we’re waiting for, especially as we see the signs of His time all around us. As we wait on His return, this New Year is opportunity for us to continue to proclaim Yeshua as ADONAI’s salvation to an increasingly godless world. It is His mercy that prolongs His time away so that more can have the opportunity to turn from their sins and turn to Him. Yeshua is the only answer to all of the problems of this world.

Our continuing message is directly related to what was just said. To be Yeshua’s witnesses, we must have knowledge, knowledge of ADONAI’s truth. We continue tonight with our topic, *Talmidim Shel Yeshua*, Disciples of Yeshua. Last week we examined Yeshua’s birth, His *b’rit milah*, His covenant of circumcision, and His *Pidyon HaBen*, His redemption as a first-born Son. If you didn’t hear this message, you can find all of this series on YouTube under this title and also the written text on our website under the Message tab. Tonight is number 5 in the series. What we saw last week was that Yeshua’s parents followed *Torah* commands regarding everything required perfectly. We continue today with the next events in Yeshua’s life.

Following the family’s visit to Jerusalem, the next personal mention of Yeshua in Luke is in chapter 2, verses 41-52. His family, living in Nazareth at that time, would travel to Jerusalem for Passover each year. ADONAI commanded all Israelite males, age 19 and over to attend Passover each year as well as the festivals of *Shavuot* and *Sukkot*. (Exodus 23:17). That the family attended Passover each year shows how zealous Joseph was to obey ADONAI. Not nearly every Israelite did that, even those living in Israel. For some living outside of *Eretz Yisra’el*, it was a once in a lifetime event. But, Yeshua’s family went every year.

Luke tells about the time they attended when Yeshua was twelve years old. After *Pesach* was over, they began their two to three day journey home. They travelled in a caravan with neighbors from Nazareth and other groups that had joined them. After they had travelled for a day, *Yosef* and *Miryam* realized that Yeshua was not in the group, and they turned back to look for Him. When they got to Jerusalem, it took them another three days to find Him. *46 After three days they found Him in the Temple, sitting in the center of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 And all those hearing Him were astonished at His understanding and His answers.* (Luke 2:46-47 TLV). They questioned Him as to why He would do this and cause them to have to search frantically for Him. *49 He said to them, “Why were you searching for Me? Didn’t you know that I must be about the things of My Father?” 50 But they did not grasp the message He was telling them. 51 Then He went down with them to Natzeret and was obedient to them.* (Luke 2:49-51a TLV). Yeshua, the

Son of G-d, was not like human children. Other than this one event, His childhood years are not disclosed. But, I believe that He had knowledge of who He was from conception. And, at age 12, He was internally preparing for His life's purpose. He knew who He was even then, but did not reveal it for the same reason "because," as it later says in other places in the Gospels, "because His time had not yet come." But, as verse 51 says, He also fulfilled His human obligations as an obedient son. As an obedient son, He would have done all of the things that Jewish boys of that time did, submission to their parents and to ADONAI.

Because of His age at that time, 12 years old, most likely He had His *Bar Mitzvah* the next year at age 13. *Bar Mitzvah*, meaning "Son of the Commandment," signifies that a Jewish male has reached the age recognized as adulthood, the age at which he becomes responsible for his own sins. We find in the *Mishnah* which was written about 200 CE, *Pirkei Avot*, "The Sayings of the Fathers" which itself was supposedly written about 200 BCE, 400 years earlier. *Pirkei Avot* gives the ages at which different things were to occur for Jewish males. Here are the ones which could have applied to Yeshua: "At five years of age the study of Scripture, at ten the study of *Mishnah*, at thirteen subject to the commandments." They were started early in preparation for spiritual adulthood. Subject to the commandments implies *Bar Mitzvah* and its traditional age of 13. *Pirkei Avot* continues: "At fifteen the study of *Talmud*, at eighteen the bridal canopy." The insertion of *Talmud* here is an anachronism because *Talmud* and *Mishnah* in the sentences are in the wrong time period. Neither were present in Yeshua's time because the *Oral Torah* was not written down until about 200 CE, almost 200 years after Yeshua's birth. There was also no bridal canopy for Yeshua. Regardless of what conspiracy theorists say, He did not marry *Miryam of Magdala*, nor did they have a child. The list continues: "At twenty for pursuit [of livelihood]." This would have been in ADONAI's plan for Yeshua since He followed in His father *Yosef's* footsteps as a *tehton*, a builder. "At thirty the peak of strength." This is in alignment with Luke 3:23 which tells us that Yeshua began His ministry at age 30. It is also in agreement with Numbers 4:2-3 which reveals that *kohanim*, priests, were to begin their ministry in the Tabernacle at age 30. The Book of Hebrews tells us that Yeshua becomes not only a priest, but the High Priest. (Hebrews 4:14 TLV). Even though He was not from the Tribe of *Levi*, Yeshua began His ministry at age 30 just as the Levitical priests did, ADONAI's plan for His Son sent to save the world. This is not to suggest that *Pirkei Avot* is a reliable resource. It is certainly not Scripture, but probably does give, at least a partially accurate view of a male's life in the early centuries. But, Luke 3 and Numbers 4 are continuing witnesses which show us that Yeshua did everything perfectly according to *Torah*.

To better understand Yeshua, we also have to understand His cousin *Yochanan*, John, the son of Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth. Cousin John was about six months older than Yeshua. The circumstances surrounding his birth are described in Luke chapter 1. John's father *Zechar'yah*, Zechariah, was of the Tribe of *Levi* and was a *kohen*, a priest. That means that John was also a *kohen*, but he seemingly rejected it and chose to live in the wilderness. We are not told why, but one reason he may have rejected his priesthood was because of the corruptness of the leading priests. We get a sense of this in his criticism of some Sadducees in Matthew 3:7 as "a group of vipers," and it is undeniable that the priesthood was corrupt under the High Priest Caiaphas, the man who perpetrated Yeshua's murder.

On the day of John's *b'rit milah*, his covenant of circumcision, and his naming, his father Zechariah prophesied about him, saying: 76 "And you, child, will be called a prophet of Elyon. For you will go before Adonai to prepare His ways, 77 to give knowledge of salvation to His people through removal of their sins." (Luke 1:76-77 TLV). These were not Zechariah's

words, but words directly from *Ruach HaKodesh*, the Holy Spirit. We focus on the words, “For you will go before ADONAI to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people through removal of their sins.” What Zechariah said meant that his son John was to be an Elijah figure for his day. Mark introduces John in his Gospel by writing: *2 As Isaiah the prophet has written, “Behold, I send My messenger before You, who will prepare Your way.”* (Mark 1:2 TLV). There is one small problem with this statement. It was not Isaiah who wrote this. It was Malachi. Theologians explain this by referring to it as a “composite quotation,” a quotation from more than one source and say that the most important author is the one who is referenced. We will see that in a moment as the quotation continues with Isaiah’s words.

But Malachi’s words are important and that’s not all that he said. Reading just that much would cause those in Yeshua’s day to remember the rest of what Malachi wrote: *1 “Behold, I am sending My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. Suddenly He will come to His Temple—the Lord whom you seek—and the Messenger of the covenant—the One whom you desire— behold, He is coming,” says Adonai-Tzva’ot.* (Malachi 3:1 TLV). Note the reference: Malachi chapter 3, verse 1. I recommend that everyone read from a Hebrew oriented Bible such as the TLV or the CJB. This verse points out a part of the need for doing just that. Christian oriented Bibles add a chapter 4 with this verse found in chapter 4, verses 5 and 6. This happens fairly frequently throughout the *Tanakh*. But, don’t just rely on your Bible. Refer frequently to concordances, either in book form or online. See what the Hebrew or the Greek says to verify what you are reading in your Hebrew oriented Bible. But, what we need to remember from these verses is that Mark told us that John was the 1st century Elijah figure who would clear the way before the Messiah; he would begin the cry for *t’shuvah*, repentance, and would then introduce the Messiah Himself.

Mark continued: *3 “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way of Adonai, and make His paths straight.’”* (Mark 1:3 TLV). This one quotation is a use of *remez*, a Hebrew teaching method using key words to hint back at an earlier Scripture. In this case, it is a reference to Isaiah, whom Mark originally quoted. This verse is the second part of a composite quotation, a quotation which has more than one individual being quoted. Mark wanted his readers to understand that it was Isaiah who was speaking and it would have brought this verse to their minds: *3 A voice cries out in the wilderness, “Prepare the way of Adonai, Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”* (Isaiah 40:3 TLV). In his chapter 3, Matthew also quotes this same verse, Isaiah 40 verse 3. And, Luke adds more from Isaiah chapter 40: *5 “Every valley shall be filled up and every mountain and hill brought low. The crooked shall be made straight and the rough ways made smooth, 6 and all humanity shall see the salvation of God,”* (Luke 3:5-6 TLV), a quote of Isaiah 40:3-5. All humanity, every human being, shall see the salvation of G-d, is a direct reference to Yeshua whose formal name, *Yehoshua*, means “G-d is salvation.” It was true in the 1st century and it’s true today. Everyone can see Yeshua, but do not recognize that ADONAI’s salvation is in and through Him.

What is the connection between the actual Prophet Elijah and the Elijah figure prophesied to come? The *rabbis* believe that Malachi and Isaiah prophesied of an Elijah figure who would return because he did not die, but was taken up in a whirlwind by ADONAI. Before John was born, the angel Gabriel, speaking of the Messiah, told his father Zechariah: *17 “And he will go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of fathers to the children and the disobedient ones to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready for Adonai a prepared people.”* (John 1:17 TLV). John would go before Yeshua in the purpose

of Elijah's ministry. Luke 3 tells us that John began his ministry in the 15th year of the rule of Tiberius Caesar. That would have been the year 26 and is also believed to be the year of Yeshua's immersion by John. John's mission was the same as Elijah's, to bring Israel back to faithful worship of G-d. Elijah continually exhorted the people to repent of their sin and to return to G-d and warned them of His judgment if they did not. Now, John served with that same zeal for ADONAI, condemning sin and urging the people of Judah to confess and to repent of their sins in preparation for the appearance of the Messiah. Those who repented were immersed in the Jordan River as a sign of their *t'shuvah*, their turning away from sin.

Who was the voice crying in the wilderness prophesied by Isaiah? It was John, the Elijah figure for the 1st century, who would come on the scene just before Yeshua revealed Himself to the people. Yeshua later confirmed to His disciples that the Elijah figure was John. *10 The disciples questioned Him, saying, "Why then do the Torah scholars say that Elijah must come first?" 11 Yeshua replied, "Indeed, Elijah is coming and will restore all things. 12 I tell you that Elijah already came; and they didn't recognize him, but did to him whatever they wanted. In the same way, the Son of Man is about to suffer at their hands." 13 Then the disciples understood that He was speaking to them about John the Immerser.* (Matthew 17:10-13 TLV). (also Mark 9:11-13).

John was the Elijah figure who preceded Yeshua in His first coming, but Scripture indicates that there will be another appearance of an Elijah in the future who will precede Yeshua's second coming. Through the prophet Malachi, ADONAI also said: *23 "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and terrible day of Adonai. 24 He will turn the hearts of fathers to the children, and the hearts of children to their fathers— else I will come and strike the land with utter destruction."* (Malachi 3:23-24 TLV). What is the "great and terrible day of ADONAI?" The Day of ADONAI, *yom YHVH*, יום יהוה, is also referred to by the Prophet Zephaniah: *14 The great day of Adonai is near— near and coming very quickly! The sound of the day of Adonai is bitter— the shouting of the warrior is there. 15 That day is a day of wrath a day of trouble and distress, a day of devastating storm and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, 16 a day of shofar and alarm against the fortified cities and against the high corner towers. 17 I will bring such distress upon mankind that they will walk like the blind— for they have sinned against Adonai. Their blood will be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung. 18 Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to rescue them on the day of Adonai's wrath. With the fire of His passion the entire earth will be consumed. For He will make a total, dreadful annihilation of all the inhabitants of the earth."* (Zephaniah 1:14-18 TLV). These verses make it clear that this is something that has never happened and it will be against all the earth. The great and terrible day of ADONAI is a day of terrible destruction, His vengeance on the wicked of the present world. Yeshua told us what would immediately precede *Yom ADONAI* when He said: *29 "But immediately after the trouble of those days, 'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light and the stars will fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.' 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the land will mourn, and they will see 'the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven' with power and great glory."* (Matthew 24:29-30 TLV). Yeshua will return before *Yom ADONAI*, the great and terrible day of G-d's judgment. But, we who have trusted in Yeshua, will already have our resurrection bodies (1Corinthians 15:52 and 1Thessalonians 4:16-17) and be with our Messiah who will be ADONAI's instrument of judgment upon the wicked. In the 1st century, that day was far off, but not so today. It is on the horizon, a judgment against all of the wickedness in the world. For us, it will be a day of joy because when *Yom ADONAI*

comes, we will be with our Messiah and not experiencing what the world will be going through.

It is a tradition at Passover to set a place for Elijah. In our *Beit Shalom Pesach Hagaddah* we read this: “In Jewish tradition, the Prophet Elijah is the messenger of ADONAI appointed to herald the coming of the Messiah, when the Jewish people and all peoples throughout the world will be free. *Look, I will send to you Eliyahu the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible Day of Adonai.* (Malachi 4:5 CJB).” Other Passover *haggdot* also quote these verses: 22 “*Remember the Torah of Moses My servant, whom I commanded at Horeb—statutes and ordinances for all Israel.* 23 “*Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and terrible day of Adonai.* 24 *He will turn the hearts of fathers to the children, and the hearts of children to their fathers—else I will come and strike the land with utter destruction.*” (Malachi 3:22-24 TLV). Jews have been looking for Elijah for centuries and today we are looking and waiting with them for the Elijah figure for our time, the one who will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers. The whole world is in desperate need of the return of our Messiah. There is also another meaning of the fathers and children. It’s about Jews and Gentiles. The Jews are the fathers of our faith. Right now, we have an ever increasing amount of antisemitism over all the earth. Sadly, it is also within the Church. Yes, Elijah will turn back our physical children to the fathers and fathers to the children, but just as importantly, he will also turn back our spiritual Fathers, the Jews, to their Gentile children and their Gentile children to them. Whether this coming Elijah figure is a physical man or a move of ADONAI’s Spirit, we don’t know. But, we need ADONAI to send him now to bring about the great revival which we are sensing is near. The coming Elijah could be the key to revival before the great and terrible day of ADONAI.

The symbolism of *Rosh Hashana* as *Yom Teruah*, the Day of the *Shofar* Blast, is a day we think about as possibly being the day of Yeshua’s return for us. *Sha’ul* wrote: 51 “*Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last shofar. For the shofar will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed.* 53 *For this corruptible must put on incorruptibility, and this mortal must put on immortality.* 54 *But when this corruptible will have put on incorruptibility and this mortal will have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”* (1Corinthians 15:51-54 TLV). The name of the *shofar* in these verses is “the last *shofar*,” but it may not be the very last. There is another *shofar* called in Jewish tradition, “the great *shofar*,” which is sounded on *Yom Kippur*. 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.*” (Leviticus 25:8-9 TLV). *Torah* states that the *shofar* is in sounded in the 50th year for the Year of Jubilee. There is disagreement among the rabbis as to whether it can be proclaimed now because the *Talmud* says that all twelve tribes must be living in Israel in order to proclaim it. But, ADONAI, Himself, may one day soon proclaim it with a heavenly *shofar* sound, just as He did at Mount Sinai when the *Torah* was first given, an upcoming day proclaiming the acceptable year of ADONAI and freedom for the captives. Which is last, the “last *shofar*” or the “great *shofar*?” Whichever it is, it is the one that we are waiting for. This is the time for those who don’t know Yeshua to trust in Him so that their names will be written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. When is ADONAI’s *Yovel*, His Jubilee? Only He knows. But, whenever it is, it is our deliverance. May it be soon! *L’shana Tovah* and *Shabbat Shalom!*

