



**Yom Kippur Neilah**

September 25, 2023

### **Talmidim Shel Yeshua 9**

*Shalom aleichem Mishpacha!* For the Jews of the world, today is an awesome day. The prayer of religious Jews today is that they would be sealed for another year and that their names would be written in ADONAI's Book of Life. I don't know whom ADONAI will lead to watch this message today or who will read it on our website tomorrow or days afterward. My prayer today is that ADONAI will direct those to whom He is speaking today to this message. It may sound trite, but Mordecai's words to Esther seem appropriate: 4... "*Who knows whether you have attained royal status for such a time as this?*" (Esther 4:14b TLV). Who knows if you will have another time such as this, an opportunity to have your name written in the Book of Life? (Daniel 7:9-10; 13-14). For each of us there is an appointed time regardless of whether we are Jew or Gentile, religious or secular. There comes a time when each of us knows that today is the day that we must make a decision.

My message today is to both Jew and Gentile. There are those in Chasidim and Orthodox Judaism who know that there is no salvation in what they are doing. They just need to have the courage to deal with the ostracism that they will receive from their group. There are those in cultural and secular Judaism who realize that the world didn't make itself and that there is a G-d in the heavens who has chosen their people to be a nation of priests. They also have to resist rebuke from their community. And, there are also those Jews who have already trusted in Jesus and worship Him through the Church. G-d is speaking to certain Jews today and calling them to be a part of Messianic Judaism, a movement which ADONAI Himself has rebirthed on the earth in the *acharit hayamim*, the end of days. There are also Gentiles in the Church who know their Messiah, but G-d is calling them to be a part of His end-time movement of Messianic Judaism. And, there are also Gentiles who need to turn their lives around, those who have been living for themselves. You must make a decision today and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit to the place where G-d is calling you to serve. To the Church and the Jews and Gentiles in it, G-d has a powerful calling for you as the Church in these last days and we in Messianic Judaism are not trying to become the Church. I can only speak for myself as one leader within Messianic Judaism, but from knowing my brothers and sisters, that is also their heart. We in Messianic Judaism only want to do what ADONAI has called us to do and that is not to replace the Church, but to have a relationship of love and understanding with everyone in Yeshua's body of believers. Today, *Yom Kippur*, is an awesome day, not only because it is ADONAI's *moed*, His appointed time (Leviticus 23:27), but because it is also the day of your salvation. Allow the *Ruach Kodesh*, the Holy Spirit, to speak to your heart and have courage.

If you have been following our message series, *Talmidim Shel Yeshua*, Disciples of Yeshua, you have heard how Yeshua perfectly fulfilled everything that a man of Israel was required to do in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. You have heard how He is Son of David, the *Goel*, the Kinsman Redeemer of Israel. As Kinsman Redeemer, He laid down His life for His people Israel, having perfectly followed ADONAI's plans laid out by Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. You have heard how ADONAI promised a new covenant with Israel through Jeremiah

and how Yeshua became the sacrifice which cut the New Covenant and how He is the *Pesach* Lamb and the goats of *Yom Kippur*. And, you have heard how He took His own blood into the Holy of Holies in ADONAI's Tabernacle in heaven to provide eternal salvation for those who trust in Him. He is now the *Kohen Gadol*, the High Priest of Israel, and the Mediator of the New Covenant of ADONAI's active covenant of today. There is no salvation in anything or anyone else. Yeshua is the only answer.

ADONAI's plans are perfect. He called Abraham and because of his faith response, chose Him and his descendants to be the people that He would use to lead all the other people of the world to Him. ADONAI created all the people of the world for fellowship with Him and has used and is still using the Jewish people to be His priests to the nations. (Exodus 19:6). He made a covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai and used His servant Moses to establish the nation and the way that they were to worship Him. But, during that first 40 years and even before they reached the Land that ADONAI had promised them, they left Him and worshipped the false gods of other nations. (Numbers 25). ADONAI knew that would not be last time it would happen and He promised to punish them by the pagan nations around them. Through the years, Israel was good, and then they were bad, and the trend continued. When they cried for a king, ADONAI gave them *Sha'ul*, who was not a king who was obedient to Him. Then, He gave them David, a king who sinned, but was a man after G-d's own heart, a king who repented and only wanted to do ADONAI's will. ADONAI chose him and his descendants after him to rule over Israel forever. (2Samuel 7:12-13). But, David's descendants also rebelled against ADONAI. Some were good and some were bad and theirs and the people's sins grew so great that ADONAI destroyed their kingdoms, those in the northern Kingdom of Israel first and then those in the southern Kingdom of Judah. Judah, the nation now comprising all Israel, was taken to Babylon captivity. But, ADONAI had mercy on them and returned them to the land of Israel. And, it was there in Jerusalem in the year 30 CE that ADONAI's Son Yeshua died as the ultimate sacrifice for their sins.

When Yeshua died in Jerusalem on 14 *Nisan*, the day that lambs were being slaughtered for Passover at the Temple, not every Jew was in favor of His being put to death. It was celebrated by several hundred at most, mostly those led by the High Priest, Caiaphas. Yeshua's followers, thousands of them, were devastated when He died, but were soon given hope. After three days and three nights in the tomb, He rose from the dead and ascended to His Father in heaven. (Matthew 12:39-40). While there, He completed the mission of His life on earth by placing His own blood of the sacrifice in the heavenly Holy of Holies. (Hebrews 9:12). Soon, Yeshua's disciples rejoiced; He appeared to them in His resurrection body for some 40 days before finally ascending to His Father in heaven (Acts 1:9-11) where He took His seat on the right hand of ADONAI (Hebrews 1:3; 12:2) until He returns to earth to reclaim His ancestor David's throne.

With Yeshua no longer on the earth, it was the time for His disciples to begin to use the training that He had given them. They were told to make disciples for Him in Israel and all of the nations, immersing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the *Ruach Kodesh*. (Matthew 28:19). And, they did, first in Judea, then all Israel and then throughout the Roman Empire and the known world of that time. Yeshua's 12 disciples each carried His message forth and Yeshua soon called another disciple, *Sha'ul*, a *Parush*, a Pharisee trained at the feet of *Gamli'el*, a renowned rabbi of that day. During that same time, Yeshua's brother *Ya'acov*, Jacob (He wrote the Book of James), became the *nasi*, the leader of the congregation in Jerusalem (Acts 15) and the number of Yeshua's followers in Judea continued to grow. After *Sha'ul* had ministered among the Gentiles for years, he returned to Jerusalem and told

of his success there and the elders also excitedly told him what ADONAI had done in Judea. They said: 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). Tens of thousands of Jews had placed their trust in Yeshua including even a great number of *kohanim*, priests. (Acts 6:7). As this verse shows, the *Torah* was not done away with by believing in Yeshua as Messiah. The tens of thousands of His followers in the Land of Israel at that time were zealous for it. They were walking in obedience to the *Torah* of Moses which did not conflict with their faith in Yeshua as the only sin sacrifice. They worshipped in the Temple and in the synagogues and we read that *Sha’ul* even offered sacrifices for a Nazirite vow. (Acts 21:24).

Israel continued to struggle under Rome’s oppression and this led to rebellion breaking out. At first scattered, it became a full scale rebellion in the year 66 CE. The Jewish rebellion culminated in the city of Jerusalem in the year 70 when Rome surrounded and blockaded the city. Many Jews died from starvation during this time and when the city fell, many more were killed and thousands taken away as slaves. (Josephus, the Jewish historian). The Roman General Titus commanded the destruction of not only the city, but the Temple. Many houses were burned along with the Temple. The fateful day was 9 Av 3790, July 25, 30 CE. With the destruction of the Temple, the worship system which ADONAI had given Israel at Mount Sinai was no longer possible. The Levitical priests were scattered and where would they officiate if they wanted to? The Temple and its daily and yearly sacrifices for sin was gone. The Mosaic Covenant could no longer be carried out in the way it had been for 1,300 years. But, for the tens of thousands of Yeshua’s followers, that was not a problem. They were faithfully serving ADONAI under their *Kohen HaGadol* through ADONAI’s now active covenant, the New Covenant.

But, even as Jerusalem was surrounded by the Roman army, we are told that one man, *Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakkai*, was somehow smuggled outside the blockaded city walls to meet with General Titus. He was not a follower of Yeshua and he sought a way to continue to follow the sacrificial elements of the *Torah* of Moses without a Temple or priesthood. The general gave him permission to go and develop a new form of worship, a new way to seemingly follow the *Torah* of ADONAI. He went to *Yavneh*, a town on the Mediterranean coast, and there, he and his disciples began the development of rabbinic Judaism, a post-Temple form of worship loosely based upon Temple worship. Even in the face of the rising tide of Yeshua’s followers in Israel, *Ben Zakkai* doggedly pushed forward. He and those after him developed a way to continue to follow *Torah*, but without blood sacrifice. Even though Temple sacrifices were no longer possible, ADONAI had not changed His mind. His words spoken through Moses were true then and are still true today: **<3> [11](#)** *For the soul of the flesh is in the blood, and I have therefore given it to you [to be placed] upon the altar, to atone for your souls. For it is the blood that atones for the soul. (Vayikra [Leviticus] 17:11 Online Tanakh, Chabad.org).* Without a way to offer actual blood, the system of *t’shuvah*, *t’fillah* and *tzedakah* (repentance, prayer and charitable giving) were developed. Along with this, liturgy which approximated Temple worship was also developed in the form of *Shacharit*, *Mincha* and *Ma’ariv* (morning, afternoon and evening) services. This is not to belittle the precepts of repentance, prayer and charitable giving or these services. When they are done with a sincere heart, I believe that ADONAI is pleased with our sincerity. But, neither these nor the penitential prayers of *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* have the power of blood. Some have gone so far as to sacrifice chickens on *Yom Kippur*, but on this day, today, the only blood effective for our sins is that of Yeshua.

Yeshua is the Way, the only way, but He has not done away with *Torah*. To worship Him as Messianic Jews and Gentiles in ADONAI's Messianic Jewish Movement, we continue to follow *Torah*. The Bible is not an antinomian book. It does not speak against following *Torah*. If we think that ADONAI requires nothing of us after we trust in Yeshua, we are woefully wrong and delude ourselves. Yes, Yeshua is the only way to be made righteous before ADONAI and nothing else is required for His gift of salvation. But, our act of trusting in Him also makes us covenant members of ADONAI's New Covenant with Israel and there, we find covenant responsibilities.

As covenant members, there are requirements, commands, which we must follow. Why did ADONAI decide to make a new covenant with Israel? He did it because as He said: 31 ... "*For they broke My covenant, though I was a husband to them.*" (Jeremiah 31:31b TLV). ADONAI was very patient with Israel, patient with them for 1,300 years, until He had had enough. Now, in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, it was the fullness of His time. The 1<sup>st</sup> century priesthood was corrupt. The High Priest even bought his office from Rome rather than following ADONAI's directions in the *Torah*. He also had a very lucrative business of selling sacrifices in the Temple. A large group of the Pharisees were very hypocritical and only interested in embellishing their image. But, not all. There were also good Pharisees. But, the people, the innocent sheep, had not been taught ADONAI's ways and were in a sense, oppressed by many of their spiritual leaders. Having endured the sins of Israel since their time in the wilderness, ADONAI was now ready to make a new covenant. And, in the year 30 CE, He did.

What was new about the New Covenant? Not everything. ADONAI did not totally eliminate the covenant He had made with Israel at Sinai, only parts of it. The major change was eliminating the Levitical priesthood which had so openly sinned against Him over and over. He replaced the High Priest with His own Son, Yeshua. Yeshua became the *Kohen Gadol*, the High Priest, of Israel's New Covenant. His priesthood is an eternal priesthood, just like the one pictured in *Malkitzedek*, King of Salem, to who Abraham paid a tithe. (Genesis 14:18; Hebrews 5:6; Psalm 110:4). And then, 40 years after cutting the New Covenant, ADONAI clarified His *Torah* requirements by eliminating every command which required either a Levitical priest or a Temple in which to perform it. He did it through the destruction of the Temple and the dispersion of all the priests. We are not told that ADONAI brought this destruction through the Romans, but nevertheless, the effect is the same. With the absence of the Temple and the priesthood, more than 4/5 of the *Torah* commands became inactive. ADONAI said that He would write those remaining on our hearts: 32 ... "*I will put My Torah within them. Yes, I will write it on their heart. I will be their God and they will be My people.*" (Jeremiah 31:32b TLV).

It is now almost 2000 years after Yeshua died and the cutting of the New Covenant. We are much closer to the time of His returning to earth to reclaim His kingship over Israel. Many of the rabbinic rabbis of today sense that the time of Messiah's coming is near. They speak of *ikvot Mashaiach*, the "footsteps of Messiah," and of how the Jewish *Mashiach* is now living on earth and in preparation for his revelation. We agree that the time is near. Who will come, a human Jewish man or ADONAI's own Son?

How did we reach this present time of intense expectation? If you are as old as I am, you reached it by observing what ADONAI has done within our lifetimes. He has restored the nation of Israel after being destroyed and dispersed among the nations for almost 2000 years. After the Temple was destroyed, Jews were scattered around the world with no human hope that things would ever change. But, Isaiah saw it and prophesied it. He said: 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? For as soon as Zion was in labor, she gave birth to her children.*" (Isaiah 66:8 TLV). And, right on time, Israel was reborn as a nation in 1948, a very miraculous thing, something objected to at the time by most of the nations of the world. (For a good perspective on this, read Rabbi Jonathan Cahn's Book, *The Paradigm, The Ancient Blueprint That Holds The Mystery Of Our Times*). Israel did become a nation and in doing so, had to continue to fight their Arab neighbors to maintain it. In June 1967, the young nation of Israel was attacked by a coalition of Arab states, but primarily Egypt, Syria and Jordan. They expected to completely overwhelm Israel quickly, but ADONAI had other plans. Miraculously, Israel defeated this much greater army in just six days and reclaimed sovereignty over their capital Jerusalem for the first time in over 2000 years. And, Yeshua prophesied it. Speaking of the coming destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70, He said: 24 *"They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away captive into all the nations."* (Luke 21:24a TLV). And, they did die and they were taken captive. According to Josephus, in the year 70, more than a million Jews either died of starvation, were killed, or taken into captivity as slaves of Rome. Yeshua continued: 24.. *"Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."* (Luke 21:24b TLV). The Gentiles continued to control Jerusalem from that time forward, 70 Ce, until the Times of the Gentiles were fulfilled on June 7, 1967, when the Israeli army captured Jerusalem.

What did this wonderful event have to do with Messianic Judaism? Nothing directly, other than that it was a part of ADONAI's plan. But, they occurred simultaneously. In the mid 1960's, a Christian revival broke out in California and it rapidly spread across the nation. In addition to many Gentiles coming to faith in Jesus, there were also many young Jews. ADONAI used one Jewish man, Martin Chernoff, who had come to faith in Yeshua years before, to incubate and begin what later developed into Messianic Judaism. What initially was small groups of Jewish followers of Jesus, grew into and became what is now hundreds of Messianic Jewish congregations worshipping Yeshua, their Jewish Messiah. They continued to worship the G-d of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob under the New Covenant, but through their ancient Jewish ways. Many faithful Jewish followers of Yeshua have, through the years, made Messianic Judaism, with ADONAI's help, of course, into what it is today. And, all this began to happen at the same time that ADONAI was restoring Jewish sovereignty over Jerusalem.

Today, on this *Yom Kippur* day of 5784, our Messiah's return is near. The *Shaliach Sha'ul* encouraged the people of the congregation in Corinth with Isaiah's words, saying: 2 ..., *"At a favorable time I listened to you, in a day of salvation I helped you."* (2Corinthians 6:2b TLV [Isaiah 49:8]). Then, he continued in his own words and declared: 2... *Behold, now is the favorable time. Behold, now is the day of salvation.* (2Corinthians 6:2c TLV). Just as the writer of the Book of Hebrews spoke to the Jews of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, saying: 7 *Therefore, just as the Ruach ha-Kodesh says, "Today if you hear His voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness."* (Hebrews 3:7-8 TLV). The *Ruach* is speaking to many today and is saying: "Do not harden your heart as did the unfaithful spies and the unfaithful Israelites on that day, a day which sealed their fate to die in the wilderness. "Do not harden your heart." Today is the day of salvation for many, both Jew and Gentile. Listen to the urging of the *Ruach Kodesh*, the Holy Spirit, speaking to your heart. Don't let this day pass until you have sealed it and had your name written in the Lamb's Book of Life. (Daniel 7:10; Revelation 20:12). Then, when you say *Shana Tovah*, have a good year, it will really be a "good year." *Shana Tovah!*

