

10-05-24 Message to Roeh Israel Abilene – Shabbat Teshuvah
Torah Portion; Deut 32:1-52 Ha'azinu (give ear!)
Special Haftarat: Hos 14:2-10, Mic 7:18-20 and Joel 2:15-27
Suggested Acheron K'tuvim: Eph 4:29-32

Reconciliation

Central question of this message: What must you do this week to be reconciled to others, and to G-d?

We have a special Torah reading for this special Shabbes, which is called *Shabbes Shuvah* which means “Sabbath of Repentance/Return.” Today is the intervening Shabbes during the 10 days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur during which we are to do an examination of our lives over the last year, and do what we might have postponed doing during that time – get right with one another, and get right with G-d.

On this special Shabbes, we have a special reading from parasha *Ha'azinu*, which means “give ear!” Its title comes from the first word in the parasha.

Deut 32:1-3

32 "Give ear, O heavens, and let me speak; And let the earth hear the words of my mouth. 2 "Let my teaching drop as the rain,

My speech distill as the dew, As the droplets on the fresh grass
 And as the showers on the herb. 3 "For I proclaim the name of the
 Lord; Ascribe greatness to our God!

פִּי:	אִמְרֵי-	הָאָרֶץ	וְתִשְׁמַע	וְאֶדְבַּרְהָ	הַשָּׁמַיִם	הָאָזְנוּ ^{32:1}
my mouth.	the words of	O earth,	and hear,	and I will speak;	O ye heavens,	Give ear,
<u>6310</u>	<u>561</u>	<u>776</u>	<u>8085</u>	<u>1696</u>	<u>8064</u>	<u>238</u>

כְּשִׁעִירִים	אִמְרָתִי	כַּטֵּל	תִּזְלַ	לִקְחִי	כַּמָּטָר	יֵעֲרֹף ²
as the small rain	my speech	as the dew,	shall distil	My doctrine	as the rain,	shall drop
<u>8164</u>	<u>565</u>	<u>2919</u>	<u>5140</u>	<u>3948</u>	<u>4306</u>	<u>6201</u>

עֵשֶׂב:	עָלֶי-	וְכִרְבִּיבִים	דָּשָׁא	עָלֶי-
the grass:	upon	and as the showers	tender herb,	the
<u>6212</u>	<u>5921</u>	<u>7241</u>	<u>1877</u>	<u>9999</u>

לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ:	גִּדְּלָ	הִבּוּ	אֶקְרָא	יְהוָה	שֵׁם	כִּי ³
unto our God.	greatness	ascribe ye	I will publish	the Lord:	the name of	Because
<u>430</u>	<u>1433</u>	<u>3051</u>	<u>7121</u>	<u>3068</u>	<u>8034</u>	<u>3588</u>

These are the first words of the second “Song of Moses”. The first “Song of Moses” is found in Exod 15:1-18. I frankly think it is the former that is the “Song of Moses” that will be paired with the “Song of the Lamb” as is prophesied in Revelation 15:3.

But this, the second “Song of Moses”, is remarkable for a number of reasons. It recollects the majesty of G-d, His faithfulness to Israel, the years of desert dwelling under G-d’s canopy, the Rock that rolled among the tents of the encampment, providing not only water, but honey and oil as well.

At verse 15 in this Song of Moses, a change occurs. It becomes prophetic. It speaks of a time in the future when Israel (there called by one of the identifiers of the people, “Yeshurun”) will reject the Rock (closely identifying that Rock with Yeshua, and salvation). And it says that the consequences of that rejection will be severe.

Deut 32:15-20

15 "But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked-

You are grown fat, thick, and sleek-

Then he forsook God who made him,

And scorned the Rock of his salvation.

16 "They made Him jealous with strange gods;

With abominations they provoked Him to anger.

17 "They sacrificed to demons who were not God,

To gods whom they have not known,

New gods who came lately,

Whom your fathers did not dread.

18 "You neglected the Rock who begot you,

And forgot the God who gave you birth.

19 "And the Lord saw this, and spurned them

Because of the provocation of His sons and daughters.

20 "Then He said, 'I will hide My face from them,
I will see what their end shall be;
For they are a perverse generation,
Sons in whom is no faithfulness.

But we also look further, and see that there is some relief on the way.

Deut 32:26-27

26 'I would have said, "I will cut them [the Jewish people] to
pieces, I will remove the memory of them from men,"
27 Had I not feared the provocation by the enemy,
Lest their adversaries should misjudge,
Lest they should say, "Our hand is triumphant,
And the Lord [the G-d of Israel] has not done all this."

Remember this verse, as you hear the wailing cries from the minarets of
the mosques of the world, as they cry out “*Allah hu akbar*”, saying
“Allah is *greater*.”

This begs the question - greater *than whom*? The central theological
creed of Islam is directed toward none other than the G-d that you and I

serve. Make no mistake. And don't allow anyone to translate the name "Allah" as "God". Allah is certainly a god... but he is NOT *the G-d*.

And it is here, in this passage, we find that G-d's hand is stayed from the punishment due His people for our unbelief, and then the blessing of His divine judgment against our oppressors begins.

As we get to verse 37, please notice first of all, that the one doing the speaking changes dramatically. Moses stops speaking, and the voice comes from G-d Himself. That is a marker in the text that what is now being spoken in this Song is *not of Moses'*, but rather of G-d.

As the prophetic passage begins, we see that G-d's anger does not burn forever. He has not discarded His people. Hear as G-d addresses these oppressors of Israel.

Deut 32:37-43

37 "And He will say [to those nations who worship false gods], 'Where are their gods, The rock in which they sought refuge?

38 'Who ate the fat of their sacrifices, And drank the wine of their libation? Let them rise up and help you, Let them be your hiding place!

39 'See now that I, I am He, [notice here the change of person speaking, from Moses to G-d] And there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded, and it is I who heal; And there is no one who can deliver from My hand.

40 'Indeed, I lift up My hand to heaven, And say, as I live forever,

41 If I sharpen My flashing sword, And My hand takes hold on justice, I will render vengeance on My adversaries, And I will repay those who hate Me.

42 'I will make My arrows drunk with blood,
And My sword shall devour flesh, With the blood of the slain and the captives, From the ~~long-haired leaders~~ [multiple of same word as Pharaoh] of the enemy.' [now notice how the person speaking ceases to be G-d, and is back to Moses, as he refers to G-d in the third person again]

43 "Rejoice, O nations, with His people; For He will avenge the blood of His servants, And will render vengeance on His adversaries, And will atone for His land and His people."
[That atonement is in Yeshua].

I believe it was this passage that Rb. Shaul (Paul) used as at least part of his springboard for some theological edification directed to the members of the congregation at Rome who were not of Hebrew descent, and who clearly were holding in low regard those in the congregation who were of Hebrew descent.

Rom 11:1-17

11 I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? 3 "Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, they have torn down Thine altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life." 4 But what is the divine response to him? "I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." 5 In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice. 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. 7 What then? That which Israel is seeking for, it

has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened; 8 just as it is written,

"God gave them a spirit of stupor,
Eyes to see not and ears to hear not,
Down to this very day."

9 And David says,

"Let their table become a snare and a trap,
And a stumbling block and a retribution to them.
10 "Let their eyes be darkened to see not,
And bend their backs forever."

11 I say then, they [the Hebrew people who did not embrace G-d and His Yeshua] did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation [lit. Yeshua] has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous. 12 Now if their transgression be riches for the world and their failure be riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be! 13 But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 14 if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow

countrymen and save some of them. 15 For if their rejection be the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? 16 And if the first piece of dough be holy, the lump is also; and if the root be holy, the branches are too.

Sadly, too much of the normative church today likewise holds Messianic Jews in low regard. In fact, too many pastors still declare that the church has replaced Israel as the “chosen people”.

Moses prophesied in today’s parasha that the Jewish people would to a large degree reject G-d and His Yeshua, but it breaks my heart to see that some of today’s churches have done the same. Paul saw this coming, and instructed Timothy not to be discouraged as he taught the Torah.

2 Tim 4:3-4

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; 4 and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.

Let's now turn to focus closely on the matter of reconciliation.

We are supposed to keep short accounts with one another. We should not let a day end with an unresolved issue with a brother or sister. And our Sages have said, "Repent one day before you die. And since you do now know the date of your death... repent daily to G-d."

Those are the ideals of our faith. But our human nature sometimes prevails over our better ideals, and we delay in this important task. G-d has set this date so that we will be finally compelled to "sweep out the corners" of our lives now, if there is any lingering stuff hanging around.

These are the days during which our people repent to one another, and repent to G-d, for various transgressions that we have committed over the last year.

Teshuvah is often translated as "repentance", but that translation is quite weak. In fact, I believe it tends to mislead. To the average Christian, when they hear the word "repent", they simply believe it means to go to someone to say "I'm sorry". That is not a bad thing. But it is only one step of many that should be happening.

The Hebrew root word is *shuvah*, which means “return”. It carries with it the concepts of stopping the bad direction of an action in your life, turning around, and going a good direction.

Shuvah carries with it a visual image. Imagine a person walking toward darkness, and away from the light. That person then sees his error, and stops. He turns to see the light that is at his back. He realizes the good of that light, and walks toward it.

But should we whose lives are more directed toward light than darkness ignore this principle? No. You may not need to turn around completely. But you can adjust your walk so that you are approaching the light directly, and not at an angle.

I praise G-d that not one of us in this congregation is walking toward darkness. Each is walking toward the light as much as he knows how, even if we stumble.

But we each still have *some darkness* that yet lingers in the corners of our lives that needs to be recognized, stopped, and swept away.

What is the source of that darkness? Some darkness can be created by needless disunity between brothers and sisters in the faith. I think that

darkness can also be by disunity between ourselves and G-d – the Rock – who gave us new life.

Let's begin by dealing with needless disunity between believers.

Until Yeshua returns and sets a standard which we all must follow, there will continue to be some disunity between believers. Some disunity is proper and righteous. We are called to love one another, but we are not called to compromise G-d's standards for the sake of unity. We can have fellowship with believers who reject all or part of what we Messianics stand for but still hold fast to G-d and to Yeshua. We are not supposed to be isolated into our own community, and fail to be salt and light to not only the world... but also to our brothers and sisters in the normative church.

So, since the weekly Shabbes is Saturday, not Sunday, we cannot be in perfect unity with the normative church. When they serve tref at a meal, we don't eat it. When they celebrate Halloween, we don't join in. When we honor and keep G-d's appointed times as found in Leviticus 23, they don't join with us. So, there is considerable disunity. That disunity is actually a good thing. Our honor of G-d and His ways serves as a light to the normative church as well. We pray that our light shines

in an attractive way, so that they will come to join us in a life of greater sanctification.

But there is some disunity among the body of faith which is unnecessary, and should be resolved. Most disunity begins with an offense between people in the congregation.

At the outset, if you feel an offense, all offenses should be classified into one of two categories. The first is a sin. The second is a personal sensitivity.

It's easier to deal with a matter of personal sensitivity, so let's do that first. There are a number of Scriptures which touch on that topic.

Eph 4:1-6

4 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one

baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

Col 3:12-15

12 And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. 14 And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Rom 12:10

10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

If I need to condense the guidance of Scripture into a short phrase, it would be this: “Your personal sensitivities are less important than the unity and love to which we are called, so... get over it.”

Don't tell others that they have violated your personal sensitivities. That gains nothing. Instead, find something to tell them that lifts them up.

Eph 4:29-32

29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

If the offense is a sin, then there is an easy test to verify that fact. If you can put your finger on one or more passages of Scripture which mandate (or prohibit) a particular action of someone who has offended, then you are dealing with an allegation of sin. If you cannot do that, then the offense is likely in the nature of a violation of your personal sensitivities.

If the issue is indeed one of a sin, then you still have a further decision to make. Is the issue one of urgency, or can the matter wait a bit longer? A matter of urgency is one which requires immediate confrontation, to minimize damage to the body of faith. If it is urgent, you will need to act immediately to deal with it. I describe this level of urgency with the phrase, "The baby is in the street!" In these kinds of situations, you do not have the luxury of reflection, or extensive prayer. Step up and act.

If the situation does not have that level of urgency, then you have the luxury of taking some time, and you should do so. Spend some time in prayer, and in study of Scripture. Be certain that your own life is cleaned-up so that you can see clearly to judge properly.

Matt 7:1-5

7 "Do not judge lest you be judged. 2 "For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. 3 "And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 4 "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? 5 "You hypocrite, first take the

log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

Some have insisted that the first statement about judging commands believers not to judge. This interpretation does violence to the intent of the passage. Of course we are to judge. Judgment is necessary if we are to determine what is holy and what is not, what is right and what is wrong. But we are to judge between right and wrong *properly*, and to do that we must clean-out our own lives first.

And whatever we say to one another, it must be saturated with love.

1 Peter 4:7-11

7 The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer. 8 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Be hospitable to one another without complaint. 10 As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things

God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Here is a general guideline for approaching a brother or sister with a sin offense. If you have tears in your eyes for the offense that you have suffered, then you are not yet ready. But if you have tears in your eyes for the failure of the other to walk in holiness, then you might be ready to go to him.

You have the choice to simply shrug-off the sin committed against you by another. You can apply instant forgiveness and just let it go, knowing that G-d will deal with that other person's sins in another way. If each of us were to confront every other one of us of every sin which we observe in another, our congregation would be saturated with conversations which are confrontational and not as uplifting.

If you choose to forgive and forget, then do both! Many don't, and allow a root of bitterness to fester.

Heb 12:14-16

14 Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. 15 See to it that no one

comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled;

But if you do, after prayer, believe you are supposed to reach out to another who has offended by a sin, there is guidance.

Luke 17:3-4

3 "Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. 4 "And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."

We have guidance from Scripture on the broad scope of the process.

Matt 18:15-18

15 "And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16 "But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. 17 "And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to

the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer.

I will have much more to teach on this process in future messages, but for now, just follow these general guidelines.

If we do it right, repentance and restoration will be achieved, and the unity of the faith will be restored.

Ps 133:1

133 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!

Then, when we have each been reconciled to one another, and all the earthly baggage is out of the way, then we can approach G-d with a pure repentance. G-d can't hear our heart clearly when we have unresolved matters with one another.

Matt 5:23-24

23 "If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against

you, 24 leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.

The first step of repentance is to acknowledge our failing, confess it to G-d. Then we should follow that with turning around and walking toward the light in greater sanctification.

1 John 1:9-10

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Just as we should in conversations with one another regarding offenses, we should *listen* much more than we speak. Listen more to G-d than you speak. Let the Spirit guide you into perfect repentance.

Eccl 5:1-2

5 Guard your steps as you go to the house of God, and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil. 2 Do not be hasty in

word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God. For God is in heaven and you are on the earth; therefore let your words be few.

This is the heart of Tashlich, a silent time of personal reflection which we undertook last Thursday, and which can be repeated as many times as desired for the 10 days of awe.

And I pray that this congregation, which perseveres in this world by keeping the commandments of G-d and their faith in Yeshua (in accordance with Rev 14:12), will continue to be a shining beacon on the hill – where those who search for the real Yeshua, the Rock of whom Moses and Paul both spoke, both from the synagogue and from the church can come to find their home.