

10-4-25 Message to Roeh Israel Abilene – Ha'azinu (give ear!)

Torah Portion; Deut 32:1-52

Haftaraht: 2 Samuel 22:1-51

Suggested Acheron K'tuvim: Rev 3:20-21

Dwelling Together

Central question of this message: Dwelling together with whom, and how?

We are in Parashah *Ha'azinu*, which means “give ear!” It comes from the first word in the parasha, both in the English translation and also the original Hebrew.

Deut 32:1-4

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	וְהִשְׁמַע	וְאִדְבַּרְהָ	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>
כַּשֵּׁעִירָם	אִמְרָתִי	כַּטֹּל	הַזֶּל	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>
עֹשֶׁב:	עָלֶי־	וְכַרְבִּיבִים	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>		<u>5921</u>
לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ:	גִּדְלָה	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 is found in Exod 15:1-18. I frankly think it is the one from Exodus that is the “Song of Moses” that will be paired with the “Song of the Lamb” as is prophesied in Revelation 15:3.

But today we see the second “Song of Moses” in our parashah. This song is remarkable for a number of reasons. I want to focus initially on a single word which seems to appear over and over, which at first seems possibly a bit of an allegory, or maybe poetic language.

Deut 32:1-4

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!

4 "**The Rock!** His work is perfect,

For all His ways are just;

A God of faithfulness and without injustice,

Righteous and upright is He.

And

13 "He made him ride on the high places of the earth,

And he ate the produce of the field;

And He made him suck honey from **the rock**,

And oil from **the flinty rock**,

And

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.

And

28 "For they are a nation lacking in counsel,
And there is no understanding in them.

29 "Would that they were wise, that they understood this,
That they would discern their future!

30 "How could one chase a thousand,
And two put ten thousand to flight,
Unless **their Rock** had sold them,
And the Lord had given them up?

31 "Indeed their rock is not like **our Rock**,
Even our enemies themselves judge this.

From these few mentions, you can already tell that there is something very special about the Rock. I am not going to elaborate on the amazing significance of this Rock, but I will instead give you a separate handout which details the study showing precisely Whom this Rock might be.

Since we are on the verge of Succot, I wish to focus a bit more on that particular holy day (season), and show you how Scripture predicts all grafted-in believers will be dwelling with the Rock in His kingdom.

We can begin by looking at the Scripture which established this day.

Lev 23:33-36

33 Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 34 "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'On the fifteenth of this seventh month is the Feast of Booths for seven days to the Lord. 35 'On the first day is a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work of any kind. 36 'For seven days you shall present an offering by fire to the Lord. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation and present an offering by fire to the Lord; it is an assembly. You shall do no laborious work.

The L-rd continued his instructions a few verses later.

Lev 23:39-44

39 'On exactly the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the crops of the land, you shall

celebrate the feast of the Lord for seven days, with a rest on the first day and a rest on the eighth day. 40 'Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the foliage of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days. 41 'You shall thus celebrate it as a feast to the Lord for seven days in the year. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. 42 'You shall live in booths for seven days; all the native-born in Israel shall live in booths, 43 so that your generations may know that I had the sons of Israel live in booths when I brought them out from the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.'" 44 So Moses declared to the sons of Israel the appointed times of the Lord.

The Hebrew word which is translated “booths”, is *succah*. In plural, it is *succot*.

OT:5521 סֹכֶכֶת **cukkah** (sook-kaw'); fem of OT:5520; a hut or lair:

The translators of the Bible into English really didn't have any current equivalent in their world to what they thought the word *succah* meant.

They were trying to get English speakers to envision some sort of small structure, so they just wound up calling it a “booth”.

It is a mitzvah (the fulfilling of one of the commandments) to eat all meals in the *sukkah* (a "meal" is defined as more than two ounces of grains — e.g. bread, cake, pasta). Some people have the custom of eating snacks in the *sukkah* as well.

Because we have a blessing for pretty much everything, before eating in the *sukkah*, the following blessing is recited:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לֵישֵׁב
בַּסֻּכָּה

Ba-ruch A-tah Ado-nai E-lo-he-nu Me-lech ha-olam a-sher ki-de-sha-nu
be-mitz-vo-tav ve-tzi-va-nu le-shev ba-sukkah.

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to dwell in the *sukkah*.

This blessing is made when your meal or snack includes a grain-based food.

When entering and sitting down in the succah on the first day, it is appropriate to pronounce the blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהֵחֵינּוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה

Bah-rookh ah-tah ah-doh-noi eh-loh-hay-noo meh-lekh hah-oh-lahm
sheh-heh-kheh-yah-noo veh-kee-yi-mah-noo ve-hig-ee-yah-noo liz-
mahn hah-zeh

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, who has granted us life, sustained us and enabled us to reach this occasion.

Another tradition is to invite guests to join in the meals and fellowship beneath the succah. There is a special term for those guests. They are called *ushpizin*. That is an ancient Aramaic word meaning, “guests.”

It has been the hope of our people that certain supernatural guests might join us as a person we have never yet met, and dine with us. Those guests would include Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph, and King David.

As Messianic believers, we don’t put as much faith in being visited by the forefathers. We truly hope that they are not seeing how truly vile and corrupt this world has become since they entered the World to Come.

But we do know that the boundary between this world and the World to Come is a bit permeable to our holy ones and Yeshua came to this world from that world on a number of occasions.

He even spoke of coming to our door. Might He have been referencing His desire to dwell with us on Succot?

Rev 3:20-21

'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.

The construction of the succah, and having a meal within it among friends, is only part of what we do on this day. We wave the lulav and etrog. This practice comes from the tradition which developed from the commandment back at Lev 23:40:

40 'Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the foliage of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days.

וְלִקְחֶתֶם	לָכֶם	בַּיּוֹם	הָרִאשׁוֹן	פְּרִי	עֵץ	הָרֵל	כַּפֹּת	הַמֵּלִים	40
And ye shall take	you	on day	the first	the boughs of	trees,	goodly	branches of	palm	
3947	3807a	3117	7223	6529	6086	1926	3709	8558	
וְעֵנֶף	עֵץ	עֵבֶת	וְעֶרְבֵי	נָחַל	וְשִׂמְחֶתֶם	לִפְנֵי	יְהוָה		
and the boughs of	trees,	thick	and willows of	the brook;	and ye shall rejoice	before	the Lord		
6057	6086	5687	6155	5158	8055	6440	3068		
יְמֵיכֶם	שִׁבְעָה	יָמִים:							
your God	seven	days.							
430	7651	3117							

The Hebrew phrase in this passage which is translated in this English Bible as “foliage of beautiful trees” is a bit disappointing to me. A far better Hebrew translation, in my view, would be to read “fruit of beautiful trees.”

The Hebrew word translated as “foliage” is *periy*. It literally means “fruit” and not branches.

OT:6529 פְּרִי **periy** (per-ee'); from OT:6509; fruit (literally or figuratively):

It is for this reason that the citron is added and held tightly at the base of the branches of the willow (signifying the lips), the myrtle (signifying the eyes) and the palm (the erect spine). The citron is called an etrog, and represents the heart.

There is a blessing which is proper to recite before waving the lulav and etrog;

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת לִילָב

Bah-rookh ah-tah ah-doh-noi eh-loh-hay-noo meh-lekh hah-oh-lahm ah-sheer ki-deh-shah-noo beh-mitz-voh-tahv veh-tzee-vah-noo ahl neh-tee-laht loo-lahv

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us regarding taking the lulav.

These are held together and waved in the four cardinal directions, and then upward and downward. This signifies that G-d is the ruler over everything, that exists, no matter where it might be.



As we wave these four species, we are reminded that we are to use our lips to declare praise and to pray. Our eyes are to seek enlightenment

from Scripture. Our lives are to be upright and honorable as our spine.
And our heart should constantly seek understanding and wisdom.

One of the greatest celebrations of this festival is recorded in the book of Nehemiah. It began on the first day of this seventh month, when Ezra began to read the Torah to the people in Jerusalem.

Neh 7:73-8:3

And when the seventh month came, the sons of Israel were in their cities.

8 And all the people gathered as one man at the square which was in front of the Water Gate, and they asked Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses which the Lord had given to Israel. 2 Then Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly of men, women, and all who could listen with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month. 3 And he read from it before the square which was in front of the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of men and women, those who could understand; and all the people were attentive to the book of the law.

Neh 8:5-6

5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up.



This practice – of raising and holding the scroll of the Torah opened, holding it high so that the people can see it (called *hagbah*), as well as all the people standing as that is done – is a practice we follow today in our

congregation following the reading of the Torah. We indicate with a pointed small finger toward the scroll and chant, “This is the Torah...”

Neh 8:13-18

13 Then on the second day the heads of fathers' households of all the people, the priests, and the Levites were gathered to Ezra the scribe that they might gain insight into the words of

the law. 14 And they found written in the law how the Lord had commanded through Moses that the sons of Israel should live in booths during the feast of the seventh month. 15 So they proclaimed and circulated a proclamation in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, "Go out to the hills, and bring olive branches, and wild olive branches, myrtle branches, palm branches, and branches of other leafy trees, to make booths, as it is written." 16 So the people went out and brought them and made booths for themselves, each on his roof, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate, and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim. 17 And the entire assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in them. The sons of Israel had indeed not done so from the days of Joshua the son of Nun to that day. And there was great rejoicing. 18 And he read from the book of the law of God daily, from the first day to the last day. And they celebrated the feast seven days, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly according to the ordinance.

It is during this festival season that the High Priest would pray for the latter rain. It is said that at this time he would begin his prayers with a preliminary prayer – that the prayers of the travelers *not be granted*.

That might seem a bit harsh, but consider that the prayers of travelers are universally for good weather – in other words – no rain.

And since there are travelers at all times and in all seasons throughout the land, if G-d granted all their prayers, the land would soon become a desert.

This festival is also a pilgrimage festival. It is one of three.

Deut 16:16-17

16 Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread and at the Feast of Weeks and at the Feast of Booths, and they shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed. 17 Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you.

Some of our sweet brothers and sisters have concluded that the Torah, together with all the festivals and new moons found as G-d's appointments with mankind, were abolished at the cross.

I can assure you with the greatest level of confidence possible, that such is not the case. And one of the best examples of how I can prove such a statement is found in the final verses of the book of Zechariah, and the festival of Booths is specifically mentioned there as a world-wide celebration for mandatory attendance.

Zech 14:9-21

9 And the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one. 10 All the land will be changed into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; but Jerusalem will rise and remain on its site from Benjamin's Gate as far as the place of the First Gate to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's wine presses. 11 And people will live in it, and there will be no more curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security.

12 Now this will be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the peoples who have gone to war against Jerusalem; their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet, and their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongue will rot in their mouth. 13 And it will come about in that day that a great panic from the Lord will fall on them; and they will

seize one another's hand, and the hand of one will be lifted against the hand of another. 14 And Judah also will fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered, gold and silver and garments in great abundance. 15 So also like this plague, will be the plague on the horse, the mule, the camel, the donkey, and all the cattle that will be in those camps.

16 Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths. 17 And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, there will be no rain on them. 18 And if the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no rain will fall on them; it will be the plague with which the Lord smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. 19 This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. 20 In that day there will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, "HOLY TO THE LORD." And the cooking pots in the Lord's house will be like the bowls before the altar. 21 And every cooking pot in

Jerusalem and in Judah will be holy to the Lord of hosts; and all who sacrifice will come and take of them and boil in them. And there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts in that day.

How will it be that there is no Canaanite in the house of the L-rd of hosts on that day? There will be only two groups of people on the face of the Earth at that time - G-d's people, and dead people.

Isa 66:22-24

22 "For just as the new heavens and the new earth
Which I make will endure before Me," declares the Lord,
"So your offspring and your name will endure.
23 "And it shall be from new moon to new moon
And from sabbath to sabbath,
All mankind will come to bow down before Me," says the
Lord.
24 "Then they shall go forth and look
On the corpses of the men
Who have transgressed against Me.
For their worm shall not die,
And their fire shall not be quenched;

And they shall be an abhorrence to all mankind."

Let us rejoice this day in the future that our G-d has planned for those who love Him.

This year Succot begins at nightfall on Monday the 6th of October, the seventh day is Monday the 13th, and the eighth day is Tuesday the 14th of October.

The eighth day has its own name, Shemini Atzeret, which means "eighth assembly." Its name is derived from the Hebrew word *atzar*, which means "to hold back" or "keep in." That meaning is consistent with one of the ideas expressed by this additional, eighth day, because after we have spent an entire week in the presence of the L-rd, we are not anxious to have that fellowship end, so we linger another day, and in a sense we wish to "hold back" G-d from departing as well.

This day has a number of celebrations all its own, and significances that are unique. It is connected to the festival of Succot, but in many ways, it is a separate celebration as well.

On the 8th day we finish the final reading of the Torah's last parasha, and roll it back to the first, and we then read some of the first lines of Genesis

without a break. We do that to illustrate that the Torah of G-d really has no end, but constitutes an eternal cycle of instruction. We don't view it as a circle so much as a spiral, leading upward with every iteration.

Each year we study Torah we are able to find new insights to G-d and His holiness. And if we are in tune with the Spirit, we will also be convicted to correct those parts of our daily walk which don't line up well with what G-d expects of us – as we are to be salt and light in this world.

I have a separate teaching which I will deliver on Shemini Atzeret this year. Until then, have a joyful Succot celebration as part of the greater community of believers, in anticipation of the time when we will dwell with our King in His kingdom on Earth.