

NITZAVIM {נִצָּבִים} (You are Standing)

A Messianic Jewish Commentary

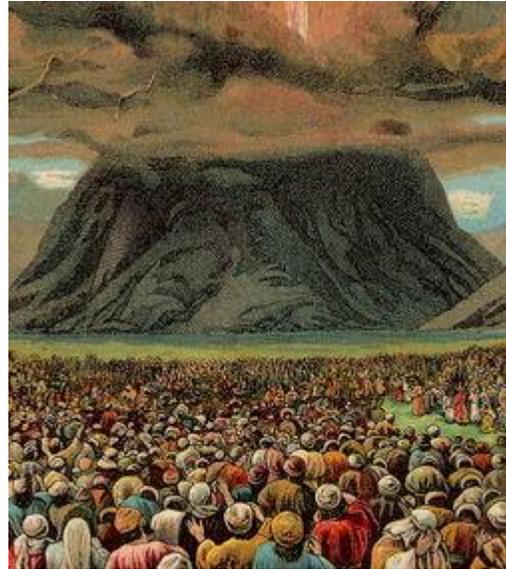
By Hannah Neshet www.voiceforisrael.net

Deuteronomy 29:10 – 30:20, Isaiah 61:10-63:9, Romans 10:1-12

“You are standing (nitzavim) this day all of you before the Lord your God...that you should enter into the covenant of the Lord your God....” (Deuteronomy 29:10-12)

Why was all of Israel collectively standing before God? It was for one reason alone: to enter into a covenant with YHVH יהוה. What a momentous occasion! This expression, *“You are standing”* (atem nitzavim) is used almost 300 times in the Bible and always to enter into some kind of contract, pact or agreement.

This covenant stated that God would establish Israel unto Himself as a unique people, and that He would be Israel’s God.



The Revelation at Mount Sinai (illustration from a Bible card published 1907 by the Providence Lithograph Company)

Moses spoke these words to the people standing before him – the heads of tribes, elders, officers, and all the men of Israel; as well as the little ones, the wives, and the strangers. All were invited to enter into the covenant (*brit*) בְּרִית with Adonai – from the least to the greatest.

Everyone, from the leaders, elders and officers of tribes, to their wives and children had equal opportunity to receive a place in the Kingdom of God. Even the stranger or foreigner (ger) was offered an equal place in the covenant with Elohim, **“that He may establish you today as a people for Himself, and that He may be God (Elohim) to you...”** (Deuteronomy 29:13).

Moses foresaw a day, through the Holy Spirit, when others would also enter into this covenant with the God of Israel. Yeshua also promised that He would gather other sheep who were not of the sheep pen of Israel and make us one in Him: **“I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.”** (John 10:16)

This covenant that God made with Israel was unique in that it transcended any limitation of time or place. It was made with **“those standing there as well as with those who were not present at that time.”** (Deuteronomy 29:15)

Although Israel broke this covenant, God promised a ‘**New Covenant**’ (*Brit Hadashah*) to the people of Israel and Judah through the Hebrew prophet Jeremiah:

““The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant (Brit Hadashah) with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them, ”declares the LORD.” (Jeremiah 31:31-32)

Once again, this covenant was extended to everyone – from the least to the greatest:

“No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, *from the least of them to the greatest*, declares the LORD.” (Jeremiah 31:34)

So if this New Covenant has been promised to the House of Israel and the House of Judah, how do the Gentile followers of Yeshua the Messiah enter into God’s Kingdom? We are told in the book of Ephesians that it is through the blood of Yeshua that those who were far away have been brought near and granted an equal place in the Covenants of promise.

“Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)—remember that at that time you were separate from Messiah, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Messiah Yeshua you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Messiah.” (Ephesians 2:11-13)

What happens to the Torah under the New Covenant? The Torah would be in our mind and written on our hearts; He would be our God and we would be His people. All would know Him – **from the greatest to the least – and He would remember our sins no more.** (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

What a wonderful covenant we have with our God. All of us can be in a relationship with God – even the very least of His people. I am comforted with the knowledge that we don’t need to be some kind of *“spiritual superstars”* to belong to God.

Also we don’t need to be of a privileged social class or lineage to be fully accepted and included in the family of God. Halleluyah! Those not of Jewish birth, who have been brought into the covenant through the blood of Yeshua, are:

“no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Messiah Yeshua himself as the chief cornerstone.” (Ephesians 2:19-20)

We cannot, however, as the Scriptures state, claim the awesome privileges of the Covenant and at the same time continue to walk in the stubbornness of our own hearts, living a lifestyle of sin. (Deuteronomy 29:18)

This principle is confirmed in the New Testament which states that there is no sacrifice for a person who stubbornly persists in sin, even while knowing the truth of God’s word:

“For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,” (Hebrews 10:26)

The Hebrew Scriptures from parashah Nitzavim are always recited on the Sabbath preceding the evening ‘Slichot’ service. This begins a special period of time called the ‘Ten Days of Awe’ (Yamin Noraim in Hebrew) which are ten designated days for repentance between Rosh Hashana (Jewish New Years) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement).

In English, this is often referred to as the ‘High Holy Days’. It is a time for deep introspection, reflection, and an honest examination of one’s spiritual state.



Especially at this time, as we prepare for the fall mo’adim (appointed times) of Yom Tru’ah (Day of sounding the shofar) and Yom kippur (Day of Atonement), we need to examine our lives for any unrighteousness.

Socrates has been quoted as saying, *“The unexamined life is not worth living.”*

Moses also asked the people to examine themselves. He warned them, in a dire prediction, that because of their obstinacy, idolatry and sin, they would be forced to endure a nightmare of tragedies including siege, famine, poverty, war, forced exile, and desolation.

Moses saw a day in the future of Israel when, due to their sin, the anger of the Lord would be kindled against the people and **all the curses of the Mosaic Covenant** will come to **‘lie upon him’**. (Deuteronomy 29:20)

The Hebrew root of the word used in this verse can also mean **to ‘beat’ or ‘strike’** and can be used to portray the crouching of a wild beast at the moment of pouncing upon its prey. So too will God’s wrath pounce upon the one who is doing evil, and yet unaware of the imminent danger.

Indeed, the Word of God did come to pass, and in future generations, the whole land lay desolate and barren, like Sodom and Gomorrah and its people sent to languish in exile. People in the nations would ask, **“Why has the Lord done this to His land?”**

And people would answer, **“Because they forsook the covenant of the Lord**, the God of their fathers, which he made with them when He brought them forth out of the land of Egypt....” (Deuteronomy 19:25)

The Lord, in His righteous anger, wrath and indignation, uprooted the people of Israel out of their land and scattered them throughout the earth – to become *the ‘wandering Jews’* in every nation.

The good news, however, is that our God is a merciful God. He did not hold onto His anger forever, but even at the time of Moses, promised that one day the children of Israel would return to God – and to their land.

The Prophets told of a day that God would **‘turn their captivity**, and having compassion on His people, would gather them back into the land of their Fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel). When the Lord brought us out of our captivity, it was like a dream come true – we were filled with joy and came back to the Land singing of the mercies of the Lord.



Jewish immigrants walking to Palestine 1930

“When the Lord brought back the captivity of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing.” (Psalm 126:1-2)

Thank you to all those who helped us, or other Jewish people to come home! This is cause for great joy and gladness.

No longer do the nations come and look at the desolate, barren land and think of the terrible wrath of the Lord which He poured out upon the Land and people.

Now when the nations come to Israel, they eyewitness the amazing miracles God has performed - the deserts are blooming like a rose - like the Garden of Eden - and the Jewish people are coming home. Anyone can see that God has done great things for Israel.



Then they said among the nations, **“The Lord has done great things for them.” The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad.**” (Psalm 126:3)

God has such wonderful promises for Israel that He is now bringing to pass before our very eyes! He has restored the land to fruitfulness and is bringing His people back from all four corners of the earth.

“But you, mountains of Israel, will produce branches and fruit for my people Israel, for they will soon come home... and I will cause many people to live on you—yes, all of Israel. The towns will be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt.” (Ezekiel 36:8-10)

Jewish people living in the Diaspora were never meant to find comfort and security there; it is a shameful sign of divine punishment that God’s people live outside the Land. The prophet Ezekiel said it brings a **‘reproach on God’s name’**:

“And wherever they went among the nations they profaned My holy name, for it was said of them, ‘These are the LORD’s people, and yet they had to leave His land.’” (Ezekiel 36:20)

The Lord in His mercy promised in these Scriptures as well as through all the Hebrew Prophets that **“If any of you are dispersed in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there will the Lord your God gather you and from there will He fetch you. And the Lord your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed and you shall possess it.”** (Deuteronomy 30:1-5)



Yemenite Jews coming to Israel

Choose Life

In parashat Nitzavim, God set before the Jewish people two diametrically opposed choices: life and good or death and evil (*et ha'chayim v'et ha'tov; v'et hamavet v'et hara*). Just as a good father might instruct his son or daughter as to what is the best decision to make, God commanded His children to choose life.

“This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.” (Deuteronomy 30:19)

What does this show us? These verses reveal that God gave us the Torah as a guide to what is good and what is evil – what is right and what is wrong - but it is up to each individual to either live according to God’s Word - or conforming to the moral standards of the world.

This is the concept of free will which God has given to mankind. One ancient Jewish biblical commentator, Rashi, cited a story in the oral tradition (in Niddah) which states that the angel responsible for conception asked God whether the child would be strong or weak; wise or foolish; rich or poor in the future. The angel, however, never asks God if the child will grow up to be wicked or righteous, since God may determine the circumstances of one’s life but the decision to choose the good path or the evil one has been left up to man’s own free will.

Baruch Hashem – Blessed Be His Name

We may not be able to control the circumstances that come into our life; but we can determine how we will react to them. One morning recently I ran into an older woman whose son had passed away from cancer leaving behind a lovely young wife with three small children.

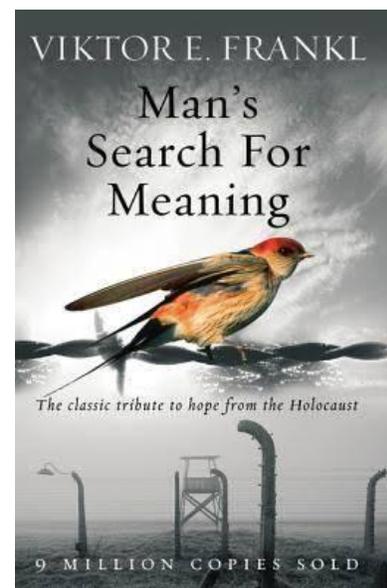
This was an observant, Orthodox Jewish family and I wondered how they would react to such a terrible tragedy. It was then that I overheard the woman speaking to a friend on the phone and her words were full only of honor towards God, frequently uttering, “*Baruch Hashem*” (blessed be His Name).

It reminded me of Job who, after losing his health, his children and his livelihood, was able to say, “**He gives and He takes away. Baruch Hashem**” (Blessed be His name).” (Job 1:21)

A famous psychologist and Holocaust survivor, Viktor Frankl, wrote about man’s ability to exercise free will in his book, Man’s Search for Meaning. He wrote of the horrific circumstances in the Nazi’s concentration and death camps. Although it might be expected that man would be incapable of acting in kind, moral, humane ways under such terrible conditions, Frankl reported that this was not the case; but that he observed many examples of heroic individuals.

This shows us that even under extreme physical and emotional stress, we can choose our behavior – whether to love and forgive – or remain in hatred and bitterness. Frankl wrote,

“ [these men] offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken away from a man but one thing: the last of human freedoms --



to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way . . . “ (page 86-88)

It is fortunate that most of us will never have to endure such brutal conditions, but each one of us will be presented with choices throughout our lives. Especially when dealing with serious adversity, we must choose whether or not to be courageous, unselfish and faithful; or bow to fear, fight for our rights and lose our human dignity.

Our moral and ethical will may be tested at various times throughout our lives. We cannot plead, as did some of the Nazis charged with war crimes, who claimed in their own defense, “I had no choice.... I was just following orders”.

The truth is that we always have the ability to act in accordance with the Torah and its values or to walk along that broad path that leads to destruction. We would do well to consider carefully our ways as we prepare to enter into a time period called the ‘*Days of Awe.*’

These ten days (Yamim Nora'im in Hebrew) between Yom Zikaron Tru'ah (Rosh Hashana) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) are meant to be a period of somber introspection during which time we pray for forgiveness of our sins – and ask forgiveness of those we have sinned against throughout the year.

The repentance required at the time of these upcoming Fall Feasts of the Lord is meant to bring each individual back to God. It was at the season of preparation for the Fall Feasts that John (Yochanan) warned those who came to the Jordan River to be immersed in the mikvah (baptized) that they must produce fruit demonstrating their repentance.

“John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, ‘You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.’ ” (Luke 3:7&8a)

The Hebrew word for repentance, *t'shuvah*, comes from the root ‘*shuv*’ – meaning ‘*return*’. God spoke to the Jewish people who had been scattered into exile, promising that if they would return to Him, then He would gather them and return them to their own land where He would bless and prosper His people Israel. That day has come in our very own generation.

“...and when you and your children return to the LORD your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you.” (Deuteronomy 30:2-3)



There are those who believe that it is just too hard to obey God or keep His ways; but God promises that it will not be too difficult for us to walk in obedience to His Torah.

“Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach.” (Deuteronomy 30:11)

God’s commandments are not far away from us in Heaven or beyond the sea.

“For this commandment . . . is not in heaven, that you should say: ‘Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us . . . It is not beyond the sea, that you should say: ‘Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it to us . . . ?’” (Deuteronomy 30:11–13.)



The rewards for keeping the Torah are not relegated to ‘olam habah’ (the world to come); but are also for our lives here and now. They are not only spiritual rewards for when we get to Heaven; but also physical and material rewards such as long life, prosperity, and success.

As King David said, **“I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.”** (Psalm 27:13)

Making the choice to love God with all of our heart, mind, soul and strength; to listen to the voice of His Holy Spirit and to keep His commandments is the very best choice we could ever make - for this is our very life!

“To love G-d... and to listen to His voice... for this is your life and the length of your days...”

-Nitzavim 30:20

Sticking Like Glue

Our life is in the Lord our God and if we will listen to His voice, and **‘cleave to Him**, then He will bless us and the generations that come after us. The Hebrew word used for **cleave** comes from the root word for glue (devek). We need to stick to the Lord like glue!

We need to remain attached to the vine in order to be nourished with everything we need for life. Yeshua said, **“Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.”** (John 15:4)

God has set certain principles in His Word that bring life and others that bring death. Giving thanks, being grateful and content, having faith, trusting in the Lord, and obeying Him – these bring life; whereas complaining and arguing, selfishness, unbelief and disobedience bring death

and destruction into our lives. God so much wants us to make choices that lead to a life of blessing – not just for ourselves but also for our ‘seed’ – for the generations to come.

Haftorah Nitzavim: Comfort and Consolation

On this Shabbat before Rosh Hashana, we enter into an intense preparation for the coming ‘Days of Awe’ – the ten days between Yom Zikaron Tru’ah and Yom Kippur. For the past seven weeks since Tisha B’av, the remembrance of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Holy Temples, all the prophetic messages in the haftorot have focused on comfort and consolation.

The Hebrew prophet, Isaiah, comforted the exiles of Israel with the assurance that God had forgiven their sins and, in His mercy, would bring them back to their Land. The haftarah for this week, Nitzavim, is the climax of these seven messages of comfort, and is a special message for all those who have ears to hear.

This prophetic portion of Scripture which is read and studied this Shabbat omits the first portion of the 61st chapter of Isaiah, which is an important Messianic Prophecy. Whether or not this is a deliberate move to keep the knowledge of Yeshua from the common people or not is debatable. However, for this reason, it is important that we read and study the entire Bible and not rely only on these Torah portions which leave out these crucial Messianic prophecies.

This prophecy from Isaiah 61:1-10 are exactly the passages that Yeshua spoke in the Synagogue on the Sabbath (Shabbat) to proclaimed Himself Messiah (Luke 4:16-19):

**¹ The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners
to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor...**

Yeshua has proclaimed to us “The Year of the LORD’s Favor.”

The rest of the passages which Yeshua did not read are for future fulfillment:

... and the day of vengeance of our God, (when Yeshua returns and takes vengeance on the enemies of Israel)

**to comfort all who mourn,
and provide for those who grieve in Zion—
to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes,
the oil of joy instead of mourning,
and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.**

They will be called oaks of righteousness,
a planting of the LORD
for the display of his splendor.

⁴ **They will rebuild the ancient ruins
and restore the places long devastated;
they will renew the ruined cities
that have been devastated for generations.**

⁵ Strangers will shepherd your flocks;
foreigners will work your fields and vineyards.

⁶ **And you will be called priests (cohanim) of the LORD,
you will be named ministers of our God.
You will feed on the wealth of nations,
and in their riches you will boast.**

⁷ **Instead of your shame
you will receive a double portion,
and instead of disgrace
you will rejoice in your inheritance.
And so you will inherit a double portion in your land,
and everlasting joy will be yours.**

⁸ **“For I, the LORD, love justice;
I hate robbery and wrongdoing.
In my faithfulness I will reward my people
and make an everlasting covenant with them.**

⁹ Their descendants will be known among the nations
and their offspring among the peoples.
All who see them will acknowledge
that they are a people the LORD has blessed.”

¹⁰ I delight greatly in the LORD;

Wow! There is so much in here, I couldn't bear to leave it out; I hope that the Word of God will minister to each of your hearts through this prophetic word.

I believe that God wants us to raise our level of faith at this time to believe for a greater measure of His favor upon our lives as we enter the season of the fall feasts (mo'adim), which is traditionally considered in Judaism as 'Rosh Hashana' (New Year).

A New Thing

He is preparing to do a new thing in our lives! It is a season of re-birth and renewal – of rebuilding and restoring areas of our lives that have been long devastated - ruined and broken for a long time – even for generations! Halleluyah! I believe this is a prophetic word for God’s people.

God loves justice and He will repay all the unfair and wrong things that have been done to us that we have endured with faith, patience and forgiveness. He will reward us with ‘double for our trouble’. Anything that someone has meant for our harm, God will turn around for our advantage.

No longer will we go about with despair and heaviness – in mourning because of the oppression of the enemy - but we will walk in joy, in beauty and with praise to our God. All people will see and know that we are a people the Lord has blessed! Halleluyah!

Do you believe it? Yeshua said, “**all things are possible if you only believe**”! (Mark 9:23)

Many of us have been in ‘survival mode’ for a very long, long time; but God doesn’t want us to merely survive – He wants us to thrive! We are to be like that tree planted by streams of water – that brings forth abundant fruit in season; whose leaves are always green and flourishing – and that all we do shall prosper. (Psalm 1:3)

As we drink deeply of the living water of His Spirit, may God grants us the faith to not merely hope, but to really believe that God will bring this to pass – that this is the ‘set time for God’s favor’ (Psalm 102:13) .

Israel stands as a sign and beacon to all peoples everywhere of the wonderful grace and mercy of God. He can bring glorious restoration out of the worst destruction in each one of our lives. If we will give Him our ashes and mourning, He will give us beauty and oil of joy (Isaiah 61:3).

We have recently been going through some intense trials – but these have not been in vain. They are simply the ‘birth pangs’ to prepare us for the new thing God is now bringing forth into our lives!

Haftarat Nitzavim gives us three powerful images of **NEW BEGINNINGS**:

1) New Clothes:

“For God has clothed me in garments of triumph, wrapped me in a robe of victory, like a bridegroom adorned with a turban, like a bride bedecked in her finery”
(Isaiah 61:10)

God is going to give us a whole new look – and whether male or female – we’re going to look gorgeous! He is giving us a new beautiful wardrobe (yeah), fixing up our hair and

makeup, doing up the necklace of precious jewels around our neck, fussing with our appearance to make us look our best – a perfect Bride without spot or wrinkle.

This is the ultimate ‘reality makeover’. God’s Bride, Israel, is being prepared to meet her Beloved – YHVH יהוה God. Instead of defeat and despair, we are going to be clothed in triumph and victory!

Later in the haftorah, God appears, dressed as a warrior – his clothes stained in the blood of Israel’s enemies: Here is the proclaimed ‘day of vengeance of our God:

Who is this coming from Edom (descendants of Esau – terrorist faction of Islam),
from Bozrah, with his garments stained crimson?

Who is this, robed in splendor,
striding forward in the greatness of his strength?

“It is I, proclaiming victory, mighty to save.” (Isaiah 63:1)

Yeshua came the first time as a meek, sacrificial lamb, but He is returning as the Lion of Judah to save Israel and destroy her enemies – to have vengeance for Zion’s sake.

2) A NEW NAME (IDENTITY)

Just as God brought about a miraculous transformation in the nation of Israel, so will God give us a ‘new name’.

“No longer will you be called **Forsaken (Azuva)**, neither shall your land any more be called **Desolate (Sh’mamah)**; but you shall be called, ‘**My delight is in her** (Heftzi-bah) and your land, **Married** (Be’ulah) ; for the Lord delights in you and your land shall be married.” (Isaiah 62:2-4)

In the Bible, a name change is a sign of a major change or transformation. Abram and Sarai’s name was changed into Abraham and Sarah by adding the Hebrew letter hey ה. This Hebrew letter symbolizes God’s name. With the addition of God’s name to their own, they were able to be fertile and fulfill their destiny.

Jacob’s name was also changed from Yaacov (which can mean ‘heel’ but also ‘deceiver’) into Yisrael – prince of God or ‘straight/honest’ (Yashar) with God.

God wants to change our name – to know our true identity in the Messiah: righteous, holy, redeemed, forgiven, free, friend of God.¹

¹. See article, I will Change your name: www.voiceforisrael.net

Once we truly know who we are ‘in Him’, we will begin to act differently, like true children of God; others will see us and relate to us differently and our whole lives will be transformed. “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” (Proverbs 23:7)

3) The third image is that of NEW LOVE AND INTIMACY

The Hebrew root word, Baal (which occurs several times in Isaiah 62:4-5) can mean either ‘marry’ or ‘have sexual intercourse’. God loves Israel and He loves us as a Bridegroom loves His bride.

We are the beautiful Bride of the Messiah, a **‘crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord - a royal diadem (precious gem) - and He rejoices over us: “As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.”** (Isaiah 62:3,5)

God is so intimate with us that He dresses us with new garments, like a mother with a little child, He names us with a new name, as the parent of a new baby; and he rejoices over us, as a lover when making love to His Bride.

The next verses speak of the ‘Watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem’.

Will you be a **‘watchman’ upon the walls of Jerusalem** who will pray continually, day and night, until God establishes Jerusalem and makes her a praise in the earth? (Isaiah 62:6-7)

A Hebrew word for watchman is **notzer**, which is also the word used for **‘Christian’**, a follower of **Yeshua of Natzeret** (Nazareth)!

Will you call out for Jewish people to come out of captivity in the nations and to come home to the Land of Israel? Will you clear away the stones and obstacles, proclaiming to the daughters of Zion: **“Behold, your salvation (Yeshua) comes...”** (Isaiah 62:11)

Then they shall also be called by a new name: “Holy people, Redeemed of the Lord,...”

This haftorah ends with the words, **“In all their affliction, He was afflicted.”** (Isaiah 63:9) God is not a far-off entity who stands aloof when we go through suffering and pain; God experiences our anguish and suffers with us when we hurt.

When my daughter, Courtney, was in the throes of labor pains, I was right there with her, holding her hands, stroking her forehead, encouraging her that she was doing great and that soon her baby would be born.

On our journey of transformation, as we at times go through the fires and floods of affliction, we can find comfort in the knowledge that God is with us and He cares for us. He will never leave us or forsake us and in all of our affliction He is afflicted.

Isaiah writes of the Messiah that He was a **‘man of sorrows and well acquainted with grief.’** (Isaiah 53:3) I am sure that he knows what it feels like to cry oneself to sleep out of sheer loneliness; that he understands when we feel literally pulled apart at the seams by everyone’s conflicting demands, and burdened by a heavy load of responsibilities.

One of the names of God is **YHVH Shamah** – God is There. Sometimes that’s all we need – to know that He is ‘there for us’. He is still ‘God with us’ – Emanu – El. Yes, God wants to restore, rebuild, renew, and even avenge....but as we reflect on this past year, if we see pain and anguish, let us remember that we have, in God, a mother who dresses us, a parent who names us and a lover who adores us.

This may not take away the hurt. God doesn’t always instantly ‘fix’ every broken thing in our lives, but God is always there for us to comfort and encourage. Perhaps this is all we need to find the courage to begin again – to walk into the new thing that God has prepared for His Beloved.

Shabbat Shalom!

Nitzavim Study Questions

1. What was the promise that God made to the people of Israel in this covenant?
2. If the New Covenant was only promised to the House of Israel and the House of Judah then how do non-Jews enter into this covenant?
3. How is the New Covenant different than the Mosaic Covenant which the people of Israel broke?
4. Have you taken some time to examine your life at this season just before Yom Zikaron Tru’ah? Have you determined to make any changes? You may want to share.
5. What were the ‘curses of the covenant’ that came upon the people of Israel as a result of their sin?
6. How does the revival and restoration of the nation of Israel demonstrate God’s mercy and faithfulness?
7. Are you presently faced with a difficult choice? Which direction will lead to life? Share and discuss.
8. Discuss the concept of free will. Do you think that each person has the ability to choose their behavior and attitudes or is our life pre-determined by God, our heredity and environment? Discuss.
9. What is the Hebrew concept of ‘tshuvah’? Why is this a special time for repentance?
10. How should our lives demonstrate our repentance?
11. How may we be sure to ‘stick like glue’ to God?
12. Are you believing for God to do a new thing in your life in the coming year? Or do you just expect the ‘same old same old’...?
13. What are the three images of ‘new beginnings’ in Haftarat Nitzavim? How do they relate to you personally?

About the Author:

Hannah Neshher grew up in an Orthodox Jewish home and received her education in a religious Hebrew school in Canada. During a crisis pregnancy, she came to know Jesus (Yeshua) as her Messiah and Savior. She now lives in Israel with her children and grandchildren, teaching the Jewish roots of the Christian faith.

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