



Names

Messiah – English for Mashiach; anointed one; Christ in the Greek means to be smudged – anointed
 Moshe – Moses
 Shaul – Paul
 Ya'akov – James
 Yeshua – Jesus (in Hebrew it means "Salvation")
 Yĕhōvâh – God's real name forever (Exodus 3:15)

Yochanan – John

Yehoshua – Joshua

Terms

Shmini Atzeret – Eighth day, a day of rest
 Sukkot – A feast of joy and thanksgiving
 Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible
 Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible

The Torah portion for this week is V'zot Haberakhah and it means, "and this blessing." Because it is also Shemini Atzeret, it is also customary to turn back the scroll and read some of Genesis. Shemini Atzeret is a day of rest following Sukkot. Remember, we are covering different sections of the Torah that was commanded by the prophets. It's not so important how we do that, but that we do what God told us to do. Sukkot was the time that the whole Torah is to be read every 7 years (Deuteronomy 31:10-13). We now follow a cycle set up by God's prophets; it could also be a good thing to read the whole Torah on the week of the Feast of Sukkot if we are up to it.

V'zot Haberakhah begins with a blessing for the tribes of Israel. It says that God loves the people who love His instruction. He blesses the tribes of Israel even though He knows what will happen to them because they will be unfaithful to God sometime in the future. Israel left Egypt in 1447 BC and went into captivity into Babylon in 586 BC (861 years later).¹ They have been saved by God from the Egyptians – so they could serve God. Believers in the Messiah are also to serve God.

Moshe goes up to Mount N'vo and he saw all the land of Israel. God tells him that this is the land He promised to give to Abraham, Isaac, and the descendants of the people who are entering the land. Moshe died and was buried by God at the age of 120 years old. Y'hoshua (Joshua) was filled with the Spirit of wisdom that was passed onto him by the laying on of hands by Moshe and he is to lead Israel into the promised land.

The Torah portion says that there has never been a man like Moshe who knew God face to face until Yeshua that is. Yeshua also did many tremendous miracles. It says in John 21:25 CJB says, "But there are also many other things Yeshua did; and if they were all to be recorded, I don't think the whole world could contain the books that would have to be written!" I have four degrees; two in electrical engineering and 2 Bible degrees. I was doing

¹ Recent studies show Israel leaving Egypt around 1447 BC.

work for my Doctorate (my fifth degree) that I didn't finish, and I had to read a 400 some page book by someone who thought Yeshua only did 7 miracles. Isn't that ridiculous? In some places it says Yeshua healed everyone in the town!

Instead of finishing my Doctorate, my life got interrupted by the Holy Spirit and I began my study to understand the Bible in its original context. That's the way it should be understood, but isn't. People say you can just read the Bible and understand it without its context. It can't be understood without its original context; they are wrong. Context is everything; if I tell you I am going out, you don't know what I am doing while I am out. I could be going to Mars for all you know. If I tell you I made it home and I was playing baseball, you'd only understand what I was saying in the context of baseball.

God gave us the Torah so we could be a "wise and understanding people;" Deuteronomy 4:6 NKJV. Yeshua the Messiah came to give us the help of the Holy Spirit and to set us free from sin. He backed up who He was by His tremendous miracles and healings.

The Haftarah for V'zot Haberakhah is Joshua 1:1-1:18. God tells Joshua to go across the Jordan River and promises to give him the land wherever he goes. God will be with Israel if they keep His commandments. The people affirm that they will listen to Joshua. Joshua 1:7-8 NKJV says, "Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." As believers in the Messiah, we also need to be strong and courageous so that we will receive God's promises.

Further Study

Finish Strong

(A practical teaching to accompany V'zot Haberakhah)

While Praying:

- * The goodness and beauty of God's law is greater than the darkness of worldly distractions. (People often only see what is worldly, rather than truth.)
- * All that is worldly will come to nothing.
- * God's eternal kingdom is amazing and wonderful. It has a river of light to those who seek it; participating in the kingdom life brings God's working into the present.
- * God will separate the good from the bad to live in His peace and blessings.

After praying about what I was to share and working on my teaching, I understood that the most important part of my teaching was to encourage us to finish our lives and spiritual walk hard and strong. That rang a bell so to speak in my head. I realized we had just finished a book of the Torah and that is exactly what the Jews do when they finish a book of the Torah. They recite together encouragement to be strong. Let's say this together:

Hazak, hazak, v'nit'chazek!
Be strong, be strong, and let us be strengthened!

This comes from the Bible at the beginning of Joshua. "Only be strong and very courageous Joshua 1:7 NKJV. Many of the things the Jews do comes right from the Bible! Did you ever wonder how much of the ritual the Jews do has come from God? Don't be so quick to judge the Jews. Their tradition may not be commandments of God, but much of what they do has its roots in the scriptures. Their man-made commandments are rituals and need to be treated as ritual and not as commandments of God. God commands us to celebrate and wave branches and fruit on Sukkot. We wave them in joy and we ourselves shake. The Jews also see us as a sacrifice to God as we shake. We too are to be a living sacrifice to God.

We are to be a living sacrifice

Shaul said, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, **that you present your bodies a living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God;" Romans 12:1-2 NKJV. This appears to be a reference to Sukkot when we shake the branches and fruit. Theologians often wrongly attribute something pagan to the scriptures;² the Jews frame of reference was Jewish and **not pagan**.

The theologians pagan mindset is just nonsense.³ Shaul said here in Romans 12:1-2 that having a spiritual mindset is important for life and we are to transform our minds so that we do what is right. We are to be a living sacrifice just like on Sukkot when we also shake as we wave the branches and fruit.

The goodness and beauty of God's law is greater than the darkness of worldly distractions. (People often only see what is worldly, rather than truth.)

God gave us the Torah so we could be a "wise and understanding people;" Deuteronomy 4:6 NKJV. It seems the beauty of God is hidden to the world because people are mostly consumed with worldly things instead of God's good instructions (Torah means instruction).

Sadly, the things of this world are blocking the vision of the truth of God's word and the

² Because theologians take the scriptures out of their Jewish context, they form wrong doctrine. The scriptures must be understood in a Jewish biblical context.

³ And for some, their pagan mindset is going to send them to the lake of fire. "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone;" Revelation 21:8 NKJV.

Messiah Yeshua. Many are living in impending eternal doom. They have followed gods of their own making; the things of this world made of wood, stone, and precious metals; they seek pride (or pieces of paper with someone's picture on it). They cannot see the true light that the true God wants for them.

2 Corinthians 4:3-5 NKJV says, "But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves." The Messiah wants to give us true understanding.

All that is worldly will come to nothing.

The worldly think that what they are doing is of value. I was with this somewhat egotistical person this one day and as we passed a cemetery; he told me that he wanted to build a mausoleum for his burial. A mausoleum is a small stone building used to mark a grave. I was somewhat shocked, but didn't say anything. I thought that hardly anyone will care much about his grave after he is gone. Also, some give away their money thinking that people will always remember them. They too will be forgotten as others have in the past.

Everything she had was nothing

I sometimes tell the story of this very well to do person who said to me unexpectedly that everything she had was nothing. I didn't know her, but somehow she felt compelled to tell me that. It wasn't long ago that I read some of the history of her family online. Psalms 49:17 says, "For when he dies he shall carry nothing away; His glory shall not descend after him." God's eternal kingdom is important and relevant.

God's eternal kingdom is amazing and wonderful. It has a river of light to those who seek it; participating in the kingdom life brings God's working into the present.

I'd much rather base my life on eternal verities. Just a little farther down, in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 NKJV it says: "Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Trust in doing things God's ways and don't lose heart. Being spiritual will bring us an amazing eternal glory that the things of the world cannot deliver. Don't just look at the things we see; seek what will last for eternity. We need physical things to live, but that is not what life is all about. Eternity is a long time; why go for a carrot when you can live in the streets made of gold. It says in Revelation 21:21 NKJV, "The street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass."

One of my favorite scriptures that I use for encouragement comes from Hebrews 6:10-12 NKJV, "For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown

toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Be diligent to not only take care of yourself and your family, but also be diligent for the things of God.

God will not forget the good we do and how we serve others. He will not forget our diligence to do what is right and follow His commandments. Don't become lazy in your faith. Have you ever started a project, but never finished? We don't feel the same sense of accomplishment that we feel towards the things we completed. I have enjoyed looking back at some of the projects and things I have been able to accomplish. I would even go back and look at my work with enjoyment. But if I had never finished, I could hardly look back and enjoy what I did. So it is with our spiritual lives.

So, finish hard and strong

That's what the good athletes do. I remember this one race I was in and passing 10 to 15 people at the end of the race. I pushed hard and I was shocked to find out that placed me pretty high up in the regional finals for Cross Country that year. Yeshua said, "But he who endures to the end shall be saved." Matthew 24:13 NKJV. Notice it doesn't say that those who say a prayer of salvation will be saved. We have to actually follow God's good commandments and accept both the Messiah Yeshua and the Holy Spirit. Yeshua gives us the Holy Spirit to help us in life and to help us follow God's commandments.

God will separate the good from the bad to live in His peace and blessings.

God has to administer justice because He does what is right. For example, we just don't show up for work and get paid, but we get paid to do something. God will reward us for doing good. Yeshua tells a story about the wheat and weeds. At the time, the Jews were mostly a farming community so this resonated strongly with them. The weeds will be gathered together and destroyed. They are the ones who do what is evil and they are destined for the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8). The wheat will be gathered together and saved. They are the ones who will be part of the future kingdom of God.

Matthew 13:24-30 NKJV:

"The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, 'First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

Do you want to be part of the future kingdom of God? Then start doing what is right. God will forgive us and cleanse us from sin if we confess our sins to God (He is our judge and not man – 1 John 1:9; Psalm 32:5⁴). We are to actually do what is right and not just think we are right. Noah did what was right and that's what made him righteous. "Noah was a man righteous and wholehearted; Noah walked with God;" Genesis 6:9 CJB.

Finally

Yeshua was like Moshe. Just like Moshe did tremendous miracles, Yeshua also did amazing miracles; even healing everyone in some towns; He proved He is the Messiah to the world. We must accept Him and the Holy Spirit that helps us in life and helps us follow God's commandments. Joshua is commissioned to take Israel into their promised land and we likewise need to be faithful and strong to receive God's promised eternal life. Don't be sidetracked by a world that has made gods out of worldly things. We should seek things that are eternal and not just temporary. Don't seek a carrot instead of the future street of gold. God will never forget our service and love for others, and for keeping His commandments. God is just and will do what is right. Those who follow His commandments with the help of the Holy Spirit will be in His future kingdom.

4 "I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,' And You forgave the iniquity of my sin;" Psalms 32:5 NKJV.