

NEWS

CHAG SAMEACH - HAPPY FEAST CHATIMA TOVAH - GET A GOOD RECORD (IN HEAVEN)

SUKKOT CAMP MEETING

It is not too late to register for the Jewish-Adventist Sukkot Camp in Georgia.

October 14-21

In the beautiful outdoor amphitheater

Unicoi State Park, Helen, GA



YOM KIPPUR

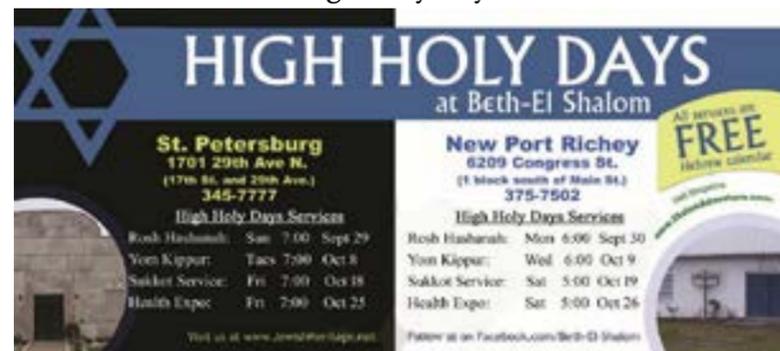
Yom Kippur is on October 9. Maybe it is a good time to gather your Jewish-Adventist congregation on that day and to pray for our Jewish friends, who are praying and fasting all the day long.

RESOURCES FOR THE FEASTS SHALOMADVENTURE.COM

Starting this week and running for the next 4 weeks there will be new articles/videos/recipes every day at www.ShalomAdventure.com concerning these Holy Days. Subscribe for free and the latest articles will be sent to your in-box once a week.

MEETINGS IN FLORIDA

If you are living in the West Cost of Florida, you can join Jeff Zeremski and his congregations on these days for the celebrations of the High Holy Days of 2019



LET'S PRAY TOGETHER

We pray every week for the Jewish Friendship Ministry. I suggest our partners pray on this week between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur (September 29 through October 5) for The Jewish people of Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay. We have several Jewish Adventist congregations in the South American Division. They need our prayers to continue their ministries.

- Dutch Edition:** Hubert Paulleta
- English Edition:** Richard-Amram Elofer
- French Edition:** Sabine Baris
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SHABBAT SHALOM

A weekly Journal of information and training
published by
the General Conference —
Office of Adventist Mission
World Jewish Adventist Friendship Center
<https://wjafc.globalmissioncenters.org>

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PARASHA FOR THIS WEEK

NITZAVIM

נִצְּבִים

PARASHA OVERVIEW: DEUTERONOMY 29:9 - 30:20

On the last days of his life, Moshe gathers together all the people, young and old, lowly and exalted, men and women in a final exhortation.

The covenant includes not only those who are present, but even those generations yet unborn. Moshe again admonishes the people to be extremely vigilant against idol worship, because in spite of having witnessed the abominations of Egypt, there will always be the temptation to experiment with foreign philosophies that inevitably lead to immorality.

Moshe describes the desolation of the Land of Yisrael that will be a result of the failure to heed G-d's *mitzvot* (commandments). Both their descendants and foreigners alike will remark on the sin-

gular desolation of the Land and its apparent inability to be sown or produce crops.

The conclusion will be apparent to all — the Jewish People have forsaken the One who protects them, in favor of idols which can do nothing. Moshe promises, however, that the people will eventually repent after both the blessings and the curses have been fulfilled.

However, after being assimilated among the nations, G-d will bring them back to *Eretz* (land of) *Yisrael*. Moshe tells the people to remember that the Torah is not a remote impossibility; rather, its fulfillment is within the grasp of every Jew. The parasha concludes with a dramatic choice between life and death. Moshe exhorts the people to choose life.

NETZAVIM, PARASHA'S TITLE

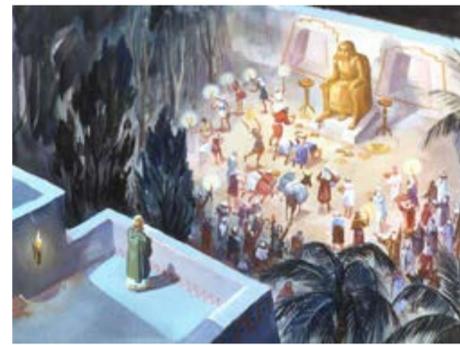
Netzavim is the second word of the *parasha* and comes from the root *YaTSaV*, meaning “to stand.” “You are standing today, all of you, before *Hashem* your G-d—the heads of your tribes, your elders, your officials, all the men of Yisrael” (Deuteronomy 29:9). The verb form *niphal* (N at the beginning) indicates the passive form of standing. Moshe is describing the people of Yisrael who are standing before him. This *parasha* is read on the *Shabbat* before *Rosh Hashana* (the Feast of Trumpets), also known as the first day of the Jewish New Year, the first day of judgment, when all the people of Yisrael “stand” *Netzavim* before G-d. This *parasha* is in preparation for that great day.

Usually the word “standing” is the translation of the word *Amad* as in verse 15 (14 in Hebrew): “but with whoever is standing here with us today before the L-RD our G-d” (Deuteronomy 29:15). *Natsav* is employed in the *Torah* as “stand,” but only in connection with G-d’s miracle-working power. One of the most impressive miracles was the crossing of the Red Sea by Yisrael where the “surging waters stood (*Nitsavu*) firm like a wall” (Exodus 15:8).

In *Midrash Tanchuma*, the Sages of Yisrael explain the choice of this expression *Natsav* here instead of the usual expression *Amad*. Rabbi Hirsch interprets: “In the face of all the dreadful suffering described here, you [Yisrael] remain standing *netsavim* firm and upright.” — *Atem Netsavim*, means “you live on and endure forever!” Moshe says: I am about to depart, and Yehoshua will likewise, and all the leaders who will arise after him, generation after generation, will all depart, and the nature of the leaders will change. Only you, the people of Yisrael will “stand” as a miracle of G-d — you will “stand” at the service of G-d.

All the people of Yisrael are “standing” in Moshe’s presence, as the *Torah* states: “your little ones, your wives, and the sojourner who is in your camp, from the one who chops your wood to the one who draws your water” (Deuteronomy 29:11). All of Yisrael stands here in order to pass over as one into G-d’s covenant.

Rabbi Hirsch interprets this verse: “If you wish to enter into a covenant with G-d, you must leave your standpoint you have held until now. You must pass over all other things — renounce all else — in order to enter into an exclusive relationship with G-d. ... Once you have entered into the covenant of G-d, your standpoint is fundamentally different from the one you held before.” In fact, G-d asks every person to accept individually the terms of the covenant and to pass through a conversion expe-



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rience — a renouncement of our old life in order to embrace the new life under the covenant of G-d.

MOSHE'S HEALTH

Let’s remember that when Moshe gave all these words to Yisrael, even though it was his last days on earth, he was still full of health and strength. “Moses stood before the people to repeat his last warnings and admonitions. His face was illumined with a holy light. His hair was white with age; but his form was erect, his countenance expressed the unabated vigor of health, and his eye was clear and undimmed. It was an important occasion, and with deep feeling he portrayed the love and mercy of their Almighty Protector.” (PP 463).

THE TESHUVA OF G-D'S PEOPLE

Moshe has pronounced the blessings for obedience and the curses G-d’s people will experience when she wanders away from her G-d. The *Torah* is ultimately positive about the future of G-d’s people. Even though chapter 30 begins: “Now when all these things come upon you—the blessing and the curse that I have set before you—and you take them to heart in all the nations where *Hashem* your G-d has banished you ...” (Deut. 30:1), the text continues showing that Yisrael will return to G-d and will not always be far from Him and His *Torah*: “and you return to *Hashem* your G-d and listen to His voice according to all that I am commanding you today—you and your children—with all your heart and with all your soul ...” (30:2).

This positive vision is interpreted by Rabbi Hirsch: “When [all the blessings and curses] have actually befallen you, you will take to heart all these experiences of the whole course of your external fate, you will bring them back to your inner mind, to deliberate and reflect on them. The result will be that you will return to G-d and to His *Torah* with all your heart and with all your soul, and that you will win over also your children to loyalty to G-d and His *Torah*. For your experiences over these thousands of years will testify before you about G-d and His Divine *Torah*, and this testimony will be inscribed forever on the tablet of your heart.”

“Today, there must not be among you any man, woman, family or tribe, whose heart strays from G-d, and who goes and worships the gods of those nations. There must not be among you a root whose fruit is gall and wormwood.” (Deuteronomy 29:18)

The Talmud affirms that the *Torah* speaks in the language that human beings understand (*Berachot* 31b). We must not be afraid to dig into it — we can understand it.

TORAH CAN BE UNDERSTOOD

The *Torah* states: “For this *mitzvah* that I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it far off. It is not in the heavens, that you should say, ‘Who will go up for us to the heavens and get it for us, and have us hear it so we may do it?’ Nor is it across the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will cross over for us to the other side of the sea and get it for us, and have us hear it so we may do it?’ (Deuteronomy 30:11–13). Rabbi Katz says “with this passage the *Torah* reminds the people of Israel that the secret of life lies not in a hidden unreachable treasure but directly in the *Torah* accessible to all.” And Rabbi Pakouz says these verses mean that the *Torah* is so crucial for one’s existence that even though it were extremely difficult to acquire, we would still have to make every possible effort to get it. It is through the *Torah* that we know how to live a happy and fruitful life for our G-d.

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TORAH & TESHUVA

The *Torah* states: “No, the word is very near to you—in your mouth and in your heart, to do it.” (Deuteronomy 30:14). The Rambam (Maimonides) gives a new light on the last segment of verse 14: “It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.” Interpreting it as if the *Torah* speaks about the “*Mitzva* of *Teshuva*” or repentance, he says the

“G-d will then bring back your remnants and have mercy on you. G-d your Lord will once again gather you from among all the nations where He scattered you. Even if your diaspora is at the ends of the heavens, G-d your Lord will gather you up from there and He will take you back.” (Deuteronomy 30:3,4)

Torah is attesting to the accessibility of “repentance.” The expression *karov eilecha* (close to you) implies a certain degree of ease. Some ask the question: How can repentance be described as easy? The Rambam teaches that repentance occurs when the penitent has the conviction never to return to his wicked ways, and is confident that even G-d can attest to the fact that he will never again revert to the ways of his past. How can a person guarantee that he will never repeat a sin of the past? *Teshuva* in its perfection, according to the Rambam, is when a person is faced with the opportunity to commit a sin in which he has previously transgressed, but due to his repentance, he does not succumb.

The Talmud teaches that a person who repeatedly transgresses a certain sin views the sin as a permissible act. (*Yuma* 86b). The Talmud is giving us an insight into why a person sins. Generally, we define ourselves as a composite of our past actions. If a person has repeatedly transgressed in a certain sin, and is now faced with the very same sin, he may think that the sin cannot possibly impact upon him any more than it already has. The feeling that the sin has become part of his character prevents the person’s extracting himself from it. The person is convinced that he will commit the sin again in the future and therefore not committing it at present only serves as a temporary frustration. The Rambam teaches us that the mindset required for *Teshuva* is one in which a person divorces himself from his actions of the past.

As is each one of us, Rabbi Shaul was confronted with this question. He goes further, giving us the answer that we have to see ourselves as dead to sin: “count yourselves dead to sin but alive to G-d in *Mashiach* Yeshua” (Rom 6:11). In this chapter he explains the deep meaning of our *Tevilah* (immersion) in the *mikveh* (ritual bath), saying that we die to our past and through our experience with the *Mashiach* we resurrect to a new life for the glory of G-d. This reminder of the teachings of the Rambam and Rabbi Shaul are important in these days before *Rosh Hashana* when people are repenting and going to the *Mikveh* in order to enter the first day of the year purified.



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APOSTOLIC WRITINGS

MARK 8:27-9:1

Yeshua gathers his disciples in the village of Caesarea Philippi: "Now Yeshua and His disciples went out to the villages around Caesarea Philippi" (Mark 8:27a). Caesarea Philippi is in northern Israel, close to the border with Lebanon, and is not to be confused with Caesarea on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. The springs called *Banais*, the origin of the Jordan River, are located at Caesarea Philippi, and then the Jordan flows down to the sea of Galilee.

These occasional trips with his disciples to Gentile territories also enabled Yeshua to distance his *talmidim* from the influence of the Jewish leadership in order to teach them important lessons. Now, in the territory of Caesarea Philippi, Yeshua is going to give them one of his most important teachings: Who is he? "On the way He asked His disciples, 'Who do people say that I am?'" (Mark 8:27b). The text specifies that he was "on the way" and the previous sentence says he "went out" – this means this question was not asked immediately after arriving in this area. First they visited several villages, they were confronted with this pagan culture, and after they saw all these people living without the God of Israel, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" Their answers clearly show that they did not understand the ministry of Yeshua: "They told Him, 'John the Immerser; and others Elijah; but others, one of the prophets'" (Mark 8:28). This is a very strange answer, because it implies that the disciples' contemporaries believed in some kind of reincarnation, but a weird reincarnation, because John the Baptist had died not long before, meaning that Yeshua and John were alive at the same time. "One of the prophets" is more understandable because they died a long time ago and could have been reincarnated in Yeshua. In the parallel *Besorah* portion of Matthew, the *talmidim* are more precise by giving the name of Jeremiah (Matthew 16:14). Why Jeremiah? Maybe because he prophesied the destruction of the first Temple, comparable to Yeshua prophesying the destruction of the second Temple. The mention of Elijah is even more acceptable, as there was a prophecy that predicted the coming of Elijah before the coming of the Messiah. Even today, most Jews are waiting for an Elijah who will announce the coming of the Messiah.

However, what interested Yeshua most was the personal opinion of the disciples: How much are they influenced by Jewish opinion? That would be good to know. "But who do you say that I am?" (Mark 8:29a). The moment of truth had arrived! Who do the disciples think that Yeshua is? Why have they followed him? Was it just because he was a rabbi among many others? The answer came from Shim'on-Peter, believed by many commentators to be the chief disciple, maybe because he was the oldest. Suddenly full of wisdom, he gave the correct answer: "You are the *Mashiach*" (8:29b). We don't know if this was the deep belief of Peter or just a split-second of inspiration, because the story is interrupted in Mark to say that Yeshua gave them this instruction: "He warned them not to tell anyone about Him" (Mark 8:30). However in Matthew, Yeshua's response is: "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven!" (Matthew 16:17). Here, Yeshua called him by his Hebrew name, Simon, which has the meaning of "the one who listens to." His name fit this moment very well because he was able to listen to God – at that moment his answer was not simply his own conviction but was inspired by God.

The *parasha* and this text in the *Besorah* of Mark are read at a very special time in the Jewish

calendar. These texts are read in September, during the Jewish month of *Ellul*, the month of preparation for the great *Yamim Nora'im* (10 days of Awe) from *Rosh Hashana* to *Yom Kippur*. That means they are read in the context of a time of judgment, of repentance and preparation in view of judgment. The first implication of this reading of the *Besorah* is to ask ourselves, for us personally, who is Yeshua? Do we recognize him as the Messiah or not? This is an important question because, according to the Apostolic Writings, Yeshua is the one who will judge the world: "For He has set a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness, through a Man whom He has appointed. He has brought forth evidence of this to all men, by raising Him from the dead." (Acts 17:31). Another interesting text says: "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved!" (Acts 4:12). Because there is no other name than Yeshua by which we must be saved, it is crucial to answer this question about Yeshua: who he is for you, and for each one of us. While it is good during these days to attend services at the synagogue or *kehillah*, it is even more important to know whether we have accepted Yeshua as our personal *Mashiach*.

During this time of *Yamim Nora'im*, Yeshua begins to speak to his *talmidim* about his own judgment. He knows that the Sanhedrin and other Jewish and Roman leaders are preparing themselves to judge Yeshua for his words and actions. Since the disciples are not ready for this crucial moment of his ministry, he must prepare them for it. Yeshua shared with the disciples that he will be judged and sentenced to death very soon: "And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again" (Mark 8:31). The response comes from the most impetuous disciple, Shim'on, who does not accept this vision of the Messiah, for this is not the future he imagined for Yeshua: "Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him" (8:32). Within a few minutes, Shim'on was the one who was in communion with heaven and then revealed the opposite, which is very often the case with those who are impetuous – they act before thinking! Yeshua very strongly reprimanded him: "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man." (8:33). Shim'on did not understand that this was not the time of the revelation of the Royal Messiah (the son of David), but it was the time of the suffering Messiah described in Isaiah 53 (also called the Son of Joseph in the Talmud). In fact, until the death and the resurrection of Yeshua, none of the *talmidim* understood his mission and how his life would ultimately end. Everyone, both the nation of Israel and the disciples, was misled by the leaders of Israel who repeated many times that the Messiah would come to liberate Israel from the domination of the foreign armies and would reestablish the kingdom of David. As a result of this teaching, nearly everyone had in his mind this distorted vision of the coming of the Messiah. Of course when he came and accomplished his true mission, accepting to die for the sinners that we are, nobody was ready to accept him, and the disciples were foremost among those who were surprised that Yeshua, a descendant of David, would not at that time restore the kingdom of David. The disciples were expecting a Messiah who would inaugurate them to govern over Israel: But that was not what Yeshua was ready to offer them: "If anyone wants to follow after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and keep following Me. Before the glory will be the suffering. Are we ready to follow him even though the cross is the perspective?"

HAFTARAH

ISAIAH 61:10 - 63:9

This last and 7th text of comfort is an exultation by Yisrael for God's salvation. After expressing the glorious future of God's people, the prophet now gives voice to Yisrael to speak and express her feelings:

The beginning of this Haftarah expresses fullness of joy. As Sherman puts it, "The verse contains two expressions of joy." And the object of this joy is an attribute of God as expressed by a name.

The first expression of joy, *soss*, which is the root of the word *sasson*, reveals a great rejoicing, an external rejoicing, based on the loving and merciful YHWH, the name of God that reveals a personal God, the One who is intimate with His people, and that connotes the attribute of Mercy.

The second type of joy, *Taguel*, is an internal exultation of "my soul" that is connected to the righteousness of Elohim, the name of God that connotes the attribute of Justice. Both attributes of God, Mercy and Justice, are present to witness God's people rejoicing in her salvation.

Then follow a wonderful affirmation of the joy of the believer who has received the free gift of salvation (61:10b). His joy is an outer expression of joy (dancing, laughing) and an inner exultation that leads to a closer relationship with God. These garments and robe are free, there is no need for any payment. In the same way, God is ready to cover our sins and transgressions freely just because He loves us and wants to save us. And God loves not only Yisrael, but all the nations – His love and His righteousness are available for every nation: "So Hashem God will cause justice and praise to spring up before all the nations." (61:11). "Justice and praise" are among the characteristics of God: Elohim (justice and righteousness) and YHWH (love and praise). "To spring up" means His people would be like a plant that has been planted among the nations and will grow among them. That is how the nations will see and will receive the benefits of God's salvation.

However it is necessary that the nations recognize God's love for Yisrael: "For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness shines out brightly, and her salvation as a blazing torch. Nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory. You will be called by a new name, which Hashem's mouth will bestow." (Isaiah 62:1-2). Zion is another name for Jerusalem, and the Holy City is always in connection with Yisrael: Jerusalem is identified with Yisrael as Yisrael is identified with Jerusalem – that is why it is Biblically incongruent even today to give Jerusalem to any people other than Yisrael. Jerusalem has been the capital of Yisrael for 3000 years, even though Yisrael has not always ruled Jerusalem.

God's people, identified with Jerusalem, will always be protected: "On your walls, Jerusalem, I have set watchmen. All day and all night..." (62:6). Then, metaphorically, we have the image of the grains and the wine which will not be given to the enemies of Yisrael: "Hashem has sworn by His right hand and by His strong arm" (62:8a). The Jewish commentators have seen the "strong arm" as the left arm of God. Malbim explains that "The right hand signifies God's miraculous intervention in return for Yisrael's adherence to the Torah, whereas His left hand refers to miracles even when Yisrael is not deserving."

"Surely I will never again give your grain as food for your enemies, nor will foreigners drink your new wine, for which you have labored" (62:8b). The "enemies" are those who are close to Yisrael and always fight against Yisrael, while the "foreigners" are the far-distant nations who are invading Yisrael in order to take her harvest and riches. However Yisrael will be blessed with her own harvest: "But those who have garnered it will eat it and praise Hashem, and those who have gathered it will drink it in the courts of My Sanctuary" (62:9).

STORIES AND TRADITIONS

ONE DAY BEFORE YOUR DEATH!

The Sages of Israel advise "Repent one day before your death" A man once quoted this to a Rabbi, and then asked, "but how can I do this? How do I know when I will die?"

That is exactly the point," replied the Rabbi. "No one knows when he will die. Perhaps it will be this very day! That is why everyone should start doing Teshuva immediately!" (Shabbat 153a)

HIDE AND SEEK

I shall hide my face from them... (31:17) Rabbi Avraham 'the Angel' was the only son of Rabbi DovBer, the Maggid of Mezeritch. When Rabbi Avraham was a young child, he once came weeping to his father. He had been playing hide and seek with a friend, sobbed the child, but the friend had lost interest and had run off to some new games, leaving little Avraham all alone in his hiding place, waiting in vain to be searched out.

Rabbi DovBer lifted his eyes to heaven and cried to G-d: "You, too, have hidden Your face from us only because You want us to seek You. But Your children have tired of the game and have run off..."

WHAT ARE YOU NEEDED FOR?

Among the chassidim of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi was a learned and wealthy man. An accomplished Torah scholar and chassidic thinker, he served the Almighty devotedly and gave generously to charity.

It came to pass that this chassid lost his entire fortune, and went heavily into debt. Furthermore, he had several poorer relations to whom he had promised to provide dowries and wedding expenses. Their marriage dates were now approaching, and he saw no way in which he could make good on his promises. Marriage arrangements had already been made for two of his own daughters, and even here, he would be unable to meet his obligations.

He came to see Rabbi Schneur Zalman in Liozna and poured out his heart with much

"But it is not with you alone that I am making this covenant and this dread oath. I am making it both with those who are standing here with us today before G-d our Lord, and with those who are not [yet] here with us today."

(Deuteronomy 29:14,15)

INSPIRATIONAL CORNER

The law reveals to man his sins, but it provides no remedy. While it promises life to the obedient, it declares that death is the portion of the transgressor. The gospel of Mashiach alone can free him from the condemnation or the defilement of sin. He must exercise repentance toward God, whose law has been transgressed; and faith in Mashiach, his atoning sacrifice. Thus he obtains "remission of sins that are past" and becomes a partaker of the divine nature...

(NL 12)

