

Week 4 Time: Awaken

Let's look at time some more this week and how God kept time. We are entering into the month of Elul. Elul is the twelfth month on the sacred calendar and the sixth month of civil calendar. It is often referred to as the month of repentance, the month of mercy, and the month of forgiveness. It is the month of teshuva. It is a time to reflect upon where one stands and where one is to go. The shofar sounds daily during the month of Elul as an awakening call to the spiritually slumbering or apathetic.

Elul is the month preceding Tishrei the month of Rosh Hoshana (Yom Teruah: Day of the Great shout), The Feast of Trumpets, Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), the Feast of Tabernacles, Shemini Atzeret, and Hoshana Rabbah. I'll talk about all these things in the weeks ahead so that we can be knowledgeable and prepared. Tishrei is the month of the High Holy Days and the Feast of Tabernacles is one of God's appointed times to bring first fruits.

Elul is a time to contemplate one's self, one's thoughts, one's words, one's actions. It is a time to discern where one stands with God. Have we been faithful in all things? How or where could we have yielded to Holy Spirit, Ruach ha-Chadesh, and been better used? Have we prayed? Have we studied God's Word? Have we given a helping hand to others? Have we taught and led our families to grow in Spirit? Have we crucified our flesh daily and walked in Spirit or have we allowed our flesh to rule over the Spirit? These are the kinds of questions one would ask themselves during Teshuva. Are we any less righteous in our failures? No, grace and mercy are still in effect. Grace is the good favor that we enjoy that we do not deserve. Mercy is the lifting of punishment that we do deserve. Neither, however, provides an escape from the discipline of the LORD.

Jesus said, in John 14:15, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." Okay, what were His Commandments? John 1:1 tells us, "In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God and the Word was God." That is talking about Yeshua, Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Proverbs 8:23 reads, "From eternity I was appointed from the beginning, before the world began."

So what commandments was Yeshua, Jesus Christ, speaking of in John 14:15. Well, all of them! Now don't get your underwear bunched up and rise up against me with anti-Semitic wailings. I'm not saying that we are bound by Law to obtain our righteousness. That righteousness, that right standing before the Lord in the courts of judgment, was paid for by the blood of the Messiah. HOWEVER,

Romans 7:6–13 (TLV)

⁶But now we have been released from the law, having died to what confined us, so that we serve in the new way of the Ruach and not in the old way of the letter.

⁷What shall we say then? Is the Torah sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the Torah. For I would not have known about coveting if the Torah had not said, "You shall not covet."⁸But sin, taking an opportunity, worked in me through the commandment all kinds of coveting. For apart from the Torah, sin is dead.

⁹Once I was alive apart from the Torah; but when the commandment came, sin came to life¹⁰and I died. The commandment meant for life was found to cause death.¹¹Sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.¹²So then, the Torah is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

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¹³Therefore did that which is good become death to me? May it never be! Rather it was sin working death in me—through that which is good—so that sin might be shown to be sin, and that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.

That passage makes it clear, at least to me, that we are not bound to the law to obtain or maintain our righteousness. Righteousness is achieved and maintained through the Blood of Yeshua. But John 14:15 left me thinking that there was an obedience issue at hand. Then, there is the matter of Hebrews 12:4-13

Hebrews 12:4–13 (TLV)

⁴In struggling against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of bloodshed. ⁵Have you forgotten the warning addressed to you as sons?

“My son, do not take lightly
the discipline of *ADONAI*
or lose heart when you are corrected
by Him,

⁶because *ADONAI* disciplines
the one He loves
and punishes every son He accepts.”

⁷It is for discipline that you endure. God is treating you as sons—for what son does a father not discipline? ⁸But if you are without discipline—something all have come to share—then you are illegitimate and not sons. ⁹Besides, we are used to having human fathers as instructors—and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰Indeed, for a short time they disciplined us as seemed best to them; but He does so for our benefit, so that we may share in His holiness. ¹¹Now all discipline seems painful at the moment—not joyful. But later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

¹²Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble! ¹³And make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame will not be pulled out of joint but rather be healed.

Hold on just one hot moment! Strengthen the hands that are weak and the feeble Knees? Make straight the paths for your feet? What is lame will not be disjointed but healed? You know what that sounds like to me? THAT sounds like Teshuvah. It sounds as though we are being instructed to avoid discipline. It sounds to me like in our obedience we gain strength and healing. Discipline? Does God discipline His people? Israel? Us? I hope so.

We are in the month of Elul. Strengthen the hands and feeble knees. Hold on to God and chase hard after Him in this time. Re-align yourselves to the straight, ancient paths of the Lord. Obey with joyfulfulness in your heart. Teshuvah!

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