

#51 Nitzavim Deuteronomy 29:9-30:20

By Moshe Schwab

While Praying:

- * The god of this world works his darkness to bring the focus on his purposes, and keeps believers separated.
- * Be connected to God and do not join the evil purposes of darkness.
- * Test to see if there is light and truth in messages you hear. Stay in God's light.
- * May God open many doors for understanding the scriptures the way they were intended to be understood.

This portion begins with all Israel standing before God. They are there to enter into agreement (covenant) with God. He will be God to them and they will be His people. They saw the abominations in Egypt of wood, stone, and precious metals. They were not to turn away from God, but keep His commandments so they would not be cursed. If they don't keep God's commandments, people will see their devastation and wonder what happened. They will know that you didn't follow God the way you were supposed to. The things hidden belong to God, but God's instructions (Torah) which are revealed are to be kept. When they turn back to God, God will bless them for keeping his commandments.

Moshe tells them to choose life and keep God's commandments; they are not too hard for them. Mitzvah means commandment in Deuteronomy 30:11 CJB. "For this mitzvah which I am giving you today is not too hard for you."

The Haftarah for Nitzavim is Isa 61:10 to 63:9. We will read these amazing scriptures in Isaiah 62:1-7 NKJV:

"For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns. The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord will name. You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; For the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a virgin, So shall your sons marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the Lord, do not keep silent, and give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

God is not done with Israel and anyone who says that He is done with them is obviously lying.

During this season leading up to Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), we are to think about our lives and how we are doing spiritually. Spiritual warfare, namely our spiritual fight to live right is an appropriate topic for this time of year.

Introduction to spiritual warfare:

Spiritual awareness is an important part of our messianic life. Through it we better keep away the darkness of the devil, and what is inappropriately worldly out of our lives. Through spiritual awareness we are more connected to God so we don't join the evil purposes of our adversary the devil. Test the messages given by man to make sure they lead us to God so we can stay in God's light. We want a true understanding of the Bible so we can be in relationship with God. Kefa (Peter) says we are to take our spiritual walks seriously so that we don't succumb to what the devil is trying to do. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist

him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world." 1 Peter 5:8-9 (NKJV)

My friend used to tell this story about what they would do to newcomers on his football team. The newbie would cross the field and unknown to him, another player would come straight at him and knock him down with no warning. It was pretty ugly. The new player got blindsided – he had no idea what was going to happen to him and he got crushed. That is what the devil does to people; the devil comes and blindsides people; he knocks them down in some area of their life and they have no idea what hit them. We are to be vigilant, resist the devil, and be faithful to God.

Our lawns in San Antonio need to be watered at times because it can be dry here. If we are not vigilant during the dry seasons, our lawns will dry up and we could lose our lawn (and the money we invested in putting in a lawn). In the same way, we need to be vigilant and resist the thoughts and outside influences the devil is throwing at us during both the dry seasons in our life and the good times. We need to stay vigilant so the devil doesn't destroy us.

1) Spiritual awareness was important for the early messianic believers.

Acts 19:11-13 CJB:

"Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Shaul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them. Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Yeshua over those who had evil spirits, saying, 'We exorcise you by the Yeshua whom Shaul preaches.'"

When Yeshua (Jesus) began His Rabbinic teaching to the Jewish community, that included a lot of casting out of devil spirits. I think the reason that it is mentioned so much is that it was a clear sign that He had the authority to do so; much more so than the rabbis of Yeshua's time who also cast out devil spirits. Also, there are two kinds of tallit; a tallit katan which is worn like a shirt; a tallit gadol which is worn over the shoulders during a time of prayer. So, an apron could be the tallit katan and the handkerchiefs could be from the tallit gadol. It is just a thought.

We see Yeshua also using the method of the rabbis to cast out devil spirits. The rabbis would ask the devil spirits name and then command it to leave. The one thing the rabbis couldn't cast out was a dumb and deaf devil spirit (it couldn't identify itself). So, the rabbis said that one of the signs of the messiah is that he would be able to cast out a dumb and deaf devil spirit.

We see Yeshua fulfilling this sign. "When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, 'Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!'" Mark 9:25 (NKJV).

The Bible says there are devil spirits. The Jewish community obviously understood this too and practiced casting out of demons. We see Rabbi Shaul (Paul) alluding to what many call "spiritual warfare" in 2 Corinthians. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds." 2 Corinthians 10:4 (NKJV). In Acts 19 we see the rabbis trying to mimic Shaul; most likely because of his success.

Continuing in Acts 19:14-20 NKJV:

"Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, "Yeshua I know, and Shaul I know; but who are you?" Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Yeshua was magnified. And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed."

1st, it says that there were actual devil spirits that went out of people. Next, there were many people here that were involved in the occult. I had a Jewish friend who came to believe in Yeshua. I told her that astrology was wrong and she listened to me. We need to encourage and teach each other. People who come to Messiah want to live right and people need to know the different types of occult practice.

Being a psychic and ESP (reading minds) are wrong. The devil knows things about others and can inform the person practicing ESP. White witches are not good; they are also operating with the help of demons to throw us off track from following God. There is no such thing as a good witch. We have to look at the profit. Is it leading people to God and the Messiah Yeshua?

What does science and medicine often say about devil spirits?

- * They just say they are not real and make it sound ridiculous.
- * When we think of the devil, what image do we see? A red person with horns. It doesn't look real.
- * These were not just bad habits or someone getting over a cold. The man with the devil spirit leaped on seven men and overpowered them so they left the house wounded and naked.

These Jewish priests probably didn't believe in Yeshua. They were just copying His method. The message that we have received is that Yeshua is over all including the devil.

Ephesians 1:19-23 NKJV:

"And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Messiah when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, (assembly) which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

Yeshua is over all! Good news!

Going back to Acts 19

- * Even though many had received the message of Yeshua, some were still trusting in their old ways of dealing with things with statues and occult arts.
- * They realized they could trust Yeshua and we must trust in Yeshua. They got rid of statues, books, charms, and rabbit's feet (good luck charms) and anything else.
- * Also, I think they realized the destructive nature of the devil.
- * The devil doesn't like man. We are made in the image of God. The devil rebelled against God. The devil wants to destroy God's image and wants the glory for himself.

Summary

Spiritual awareness is an important part of our messianic life

The Jewish believers cast out devil spirits and so did Yeshua and the early messianic believers.

Occult practices invite devil spirits into our lives.

Science says there are no devil spirits and the images of the devil are cartoonish.

Yeshua is over all and we can trust in Him.

We are made in the image of God and the devil wants to destroy us.

2) We need to know about the devil and how he works.

2 Corinthians 2:10-11 NKJV

"Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Messiah, lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices."

The devil uses different methods to deceive us. The devil has a modus operandi – a method of operation.

Can you think of different ways the devil tries to deceive us?

- * We need to be careful with unforgiveness and divisive attitudes (or with what we allow in our heads).
- * Sometimes when we get hurt, we'll make vows – some can be demonic.

How can vows lead to sin and demonic influence?

- * I'll never let the believers hurt me again. [leads to staying isolated]
- * I'll never let a woman to dominate me like my mother dominated me. [The woman this guy was married to was having a difficult time with her husband.]

2 Corinthians 11:3 NKJV says, "But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Messiah." The devil deceived Eve through craftiness and corrupted her mind. When we talk about spiritual warfare, we are talking about our battle against the devil and that's why we use the words "spiritual warfare." In Ephesians 6 it says we wrestle against evil spiritual powers. We need to know what the scriptures say about this and we need to be bolted to the scriptures. We are not glorifying the devil by studying spiritual warfare. Instead, we are exposing the devil. In the Book of Acts, they exposed the devil and people got rid of their books and charms and statues and began relying on God, and living more for Yeshua.

A story about my friend who I led to Yeshua. (we'll call him Patrick)

He was very heavily into drugs and his life was a mess.

He couldn't hold a job for long and was living off drug money.

He led a violent and dangerous life and had a gun at his disposal – just in case the police came after him or someone tried to take his money.

He was tempted over and over to go back to drugs and sex.

He was having hallucinations.

He wanted his good life back.

He was very much aware that he was in a battle and he had to take his spiritual authority over his thoughts and the demonic in his life. This is one of many success stories that I've known. His success didn't come overnight, but he kept pushing forward and eventually won out through Yeshua.

We have the victory over the devil. "Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it." Col 2:15 NKJV. Also, 1 Cor 10:13 NKJV says, "No

temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.” We can escape with God's help.

God will change our situation someday and we won't have to deal with the devil anymore, but we are not in the future kingdom yet. In the present, the devil is against us and we must and can resist his attacks.

Story of a girl who was demonically oppressed; let's call her Julie
My friend described the situation when he first got involved with spiritual warfare.

She was a 24-year-old nice looking girl.

She was seeing images in the mirror.

She was having demonic dreams.

She was hearing voices in her head and in her apartment.

Red eyes would appear in bedroom when she turned out the lights.

Devil spirits were touching her sexually.

She was being terrorized and wanted relief. My friend prayed for her and when he opened his eyes a devil spirit had gained control over her and she was mocking him. What he came to realize is that she wanted relief, but she didn't want Yeshua. She wasn't committed to changing her life—she just wanted this to stop. Just like the situation in Acts, the power is not there outside of a relationship with Yeshua and following God.

There is something else that we can learn from this. We already know that we must believe and trust in Yeshua. We must also be willing to take action on our own and fight - have holy contempt and decide that you are never going to allow the devil into life again in any way.

Summary

We need to know how the devil works.

He deceives us, is crafty, and corrupts our minds.

We need the Messiah and we must resist the devil.

We can take our lives back and have victory over the devil through Yeshua

3) We have authority and power through Yeshua and we must stand and fight

Have you ever been pushed around by somebody and decided that you weren't going to allow that anymore? Maybe they were bigger and stronger than you. We have God on our side and we don't have to put up with the devil. We are to be strong in the Lord and His power.

Eph. 6:10-13 NKJV

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

What does Shaul tell us in these verses? Shaul tells us:

Be strong in the Lord and His power.

To stand against a crafty devil.

We don't compete against flesh and blood.

We compete against spiritual wicked powers.

We are to withstand these wicked powers.

Summary

We must stand and fight.
There are organized wicked spiritual powers.
Our battle is a spiritual battle.

4) Yeshua wants something better for us.

In John chapter 8 Yeshua talks to the religious leaders of His time. They were immersed in the world and the ways of the world.

In John 8:42-44 NKJV, Yeshua said to them:

"If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him."

They didn't want to change. They just wanted to continue in their destructive behaviors that were fueled by the devil. Yeshua said about these leaders who followed the ways of the world that they were murderers and liars. He compares them to thieves in John 10:9-11 NKJV: "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep."

The leaders of Yeshua's time had bought into the devil's corrupt system. The devil steals, kills, and destroys, but Yeshua the Messiah came to give us life. Yeshua gives us back our lives and wants us to engage in spiritual warfare. "Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases;" Luke 9:1 NKJV. "After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also.... Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name;'" Luke 10:1, 17 NKJV.

Yeshua wasn't training people and giving them authority so that it would end after He left. That was the beginning of bringing the kingdom and the breaking of the Messianic kingdom into the world. Shaul said that we are to stand against the devil and that we can trust in Yeshua because He is over all. Yeshua gives us authority through Him and power over the demonic.

We are set free by the power of God and we can also help others to be set free. "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." 1 John 4:4 NKJV. Yeshua came to not only give us eternal life, but to bring His kingdom power into our lives and give us something better than this world has to offer.

Summary

Don't be immersed in the ways of the world just like everyone else.
Be immersed to a new life. This might be a good time for some of us to do a mikvah (baptism) of repentance. Jewish baptism can be done at any time a commitment or renewal is made. It is often done by immersion in water. The person goes under the water and that is symbolic of leaving the old life behind and coming out of the water then symbolizes our commitment to a new life.
The devil is out to steal, kill, and destroy just like the leaders of Yeshua's day.
Yeshua obviously wanted us to continue an ongoing ministry of deliverance.
We are overcomers.

Yeshua said, "To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." Rev 2:7 NKJV

We also need to remember to:

Get plugged into God and the Holy Spirit.

Get tough spiritually. "The tough get going."

Actually, become a changed person.

Live for the long run and make a lifelong commitment.

Allow God to work in us, heal us, and lead us.

Don't get sidetracked in your spiritual life and stay faithful.

Also, here are some emotionally crippling attitudes that we need to get control over:

Embarrassment

Romans 1:16-17 NKJV

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'"

Heb 11:16 NKJV

"They desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them."

Gal 5:22-23 NKJV

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."

Guilt

Acts 2:38 NKJV

"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

1 John 1:7 NKJV

"But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."

1 John 1:8-9 NKJV

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Rejection

Luke 10:16 NKJV

"He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me."

Fear

2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

Hebrews 12:28 NKJV

"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."

Envy

1 Corinthians 3:3 NKJV

"For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?"

Matthew 27:17-18 NKJV

"Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, 'Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?' For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy."

Jealousy

2 Corinthians 12:20 NKJV

"For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults."

Anger

Ephesians 4:31-32 NKJV

"Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you."

Colossians 3:6-9 NKJV

"Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds."

Impatience

Luke 8:15 NKJV

"But the ones (seed) that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience."

Frustration

Philippians 4:6-7 NKJV

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Hebrews 12:3-4 NKJV

"For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin."

Worry

Luke 12:25-26 NKJV

"And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? If you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious for the rest?"

1 Timothy 2:8 NKJV

"I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."