

ELUL – VITAL lessons before the Fall Holydays

The Important 6th month of God's calendar

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August 2013

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Summary: We're all looking forward to the 4 Fall holydays that start in a few days with Yom Teruah, Feast of Trumpets and conclude with the Feast of Tabernacles and the 8th Day Festival. We're planning, shopping, booking accommodations and making travel arrangements for the 7th Hebrew month holydays. But what about the 6th Hebrew month of Elul that we're in now, and wrapping up soon? Hear this message to learn the vital importance of the Hebrew 6th month. What happened in the 6th month in history? What about prophetically?

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Happy sabbath, sons and daughters of Yehoweh (or some of you say Yahweh). This is Philip, with another message from Light on the Rock. I know it's been a while since I've recorded an audio message. We've been moving – across the USA – and having to find a new home, go through the purchase process, move in, unpack, get our business established again – and on and on – so it's been tough to record, but hope to rectify that today. We also hope to be doing video messages within a few months, if that's what our Master wills.

This message will be shorter than the usual, maybe 43 minutes – but I hope you will give it special thought. Send it to others if you feel it is helpful. It is a very time sensitive topic as you will see.

We are coming soon to the autumn holy days of God. For some of you, keeping the Feasts of God is a new concept. For others, you've kept the Festivals all your life. For MOST of us who have kept it for some time, it's a time of joy and anticipation as we book our accommodation, start thinking of how we're going to get there, we may be buying some feast gifts for the children, and all in all – it's fun and exciting!

I remember going to Squaw Valley as a child in the 1960's for the Feast. We loved it up there in the mountains by Lake Tahoe on the border of CA and Nevada. We looked forward to the A-frame accommodations, time spent at the lake, the cable car ride to the top of the mountains – after all it was a ski resort. It was a time we got to see all our old friends in a gorgeous environment.

But as we get ready – and the point of this sermon – we need to also remember what's happened in the past during the 30 days or so before the fall feasts – and what they picture. So today's message is about the importance of this 6th month, the month just before the final 4 festivals. We're right at the tail end of that 6th Hebrew month, Elul.

If you miss the point of this message, you'll be rushing to the Feast to have a lot of fun with family and friends, as well as church services of course – but might miss the all-important preparation for the holy contact we will be having with our heavenly Father and our Master Yeshua.

Most of you know that the Fall feasts begin with the first day of Tishrei of the Hebrew calendar. There are FOUR holydays in the month of Tishrei, close to our month of mid-September usually.

The month BEFORE the FALL holydays begin is called the month of ELUL. As I speak, we're drawing near the end of the 6th Hebrew month.

This month is full of meaning when we study it in context of Bible history – and even more so, when studied in context of prophecy.

Let's start with the prophecy connection.

- **7th month of God's calendar has 4 holydays – all of which picture the return of our Messiah Yeshua, this time to rule the earth in power and love.**

Jews miss that Yeshua was the promised Messiah because they don't see the prophesied two comings of this Messiah: the first time as a suffering sacrifice for us, but the second time to come and RULE on the throne of David. Because Yeshua didn't rule as a king when He came, many Jews saw /see that as proof He couldn't be the Messiah. And they MISS the fact that even then, on Passover, He *was* crowned "king of the Jews", remember? Sure it was a crown of thorns, but He did get crowned even in that pitiful way as the King. Plus, the claim He made that He was the SON of God, would mean to the Jewish ears that there are at least 2 God-beings, and scripture says there is but ONE God... so that was a problem for them too. I address some of that in the 3 part sermons I gave on our Awesome Destiny series.

- IF we're soon entering the holyday season when we come in praise and worship before our Great God – and we'll be doing that literally when He returns in majesty and power, then this 6th month just before the Feasts and before the festival 7th month should be a time to be preparing our hearts to meet our God, who is returning as King of Kings this time.

In Ex 19-20, when Yehoweh came down to Mt. Sinai in a blaze of glory, He had the people preparing to meet him for 3 days.

My point is this: We should be using this time now to be getting spiritually stronger, spiritually ready, focused on what is coming ahead – and not just focusing on pre-feast shopping, what gifts and toys are we going to buy for the grandchildren and our own children, and what we'll do while at the Feast. ***These days and weeks before the feast should be a time of intensive prayer and seeking after God***, preparing our hearts and minds to meet our God!

Just like in the Spring, when we are preparing for the spring holydays, we are admonished to examine ourselves, to put leaven out, to forgive one another. Why? SO we will be sure we are ready to take the Passover in a worthy manner. Yeshua is the One who is worthy, but we must come to Passover with an attitude of having searched our hearts as we searched for leaven and removed it from our homes. It's a time we search our hearts once more for sins we're leaving in our lives.

In these fall feasts, among the Church of God community, there has not been as big a focus on searching our hearts in the FALL, as we come to the Fall festivals as we did in the spring. But perhaps it's even *more* critical that we do so during the 6th month.

THE SIXTH MONTH IN SCRIPTURE

This year 2013, the Hebrew 6th month includes most of August and part of September. We know the book of Joel, especially chapter 2, is largely about the return of the King. Notice what Joel says. He begins the call to repentance and the warning message in chapter 1. I recommend you read it. Then

when we hit chapter 2, Joel is really telling us how to prepare for what the Fall Festivals picture! He says to prepare for the "Day of the LORD is coming, for it is at hand." So obviously it was about the time just before the return of the Son of God.

JOEL

Joel 2:1-3

Blow the trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; ***For the day of Yehoweh is coming, For it is at hand:***

2 A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, Like the morning clouds spread over the mountains. A people come, great and strong, The like of whom has never been; Nor will there ever be any such after them, Even for many successive generations.

3 A fire devours before them, And behind them a flame burns; The land is like the Garden of Eden before them, And behind them a desolate wilderness; Surely nothing shall escape them.

Joel 2:12-18

12 "Now, therefore," says Yehoweh, "Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning."

13 So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to Yehoweh your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm.

14 Who knows if He will turn and relent, And leave a blessing behind Him — A grain offering and a drink offering For Yehoweh your God?

15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly;

16 Gather the people, Sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders, Gather the children and nursing babes;

Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber, And the bride from her dressing room.

17 Let the priests, who minister to Yehoweh, Weep between the porch and the altar; Let them say, "Spare Your people, O Yehoweh, And do not give Your heritage to reproach, That the nations should rule over them. Why should they say among the peoples, "Where is their God?""

18 THEN Yehoweh will be zealous for His land, And pity His people.

EZEKIEL 8-9-10

It was also in the 6th month of God's calendar that we can read Ezekiel 8-9. Notice the time setting:

Ezekiel 8:1

And it came to pass in the sixth year, **in the sixth month**, on the fifth day of the month, as I sat in my house with the elders of Judah sitting before me, that the hand of Adonai Yehoweh (the Lord GOD) fell upon me there."

And what do we read after that?

YOU read it for yourself. Go crack open Ezekiel 8 and 9 and even 10 and see what happened. It was in the 6th Hebrew month, the month we're in now, when God yanked Ezekiel up in a vision to see the evils going on in the temple and in Jerusalem. In chapter 9, God orders the death of all who were participating in the evils and who were not crying and sighing over all the abominations in the land.

In other words, this Hebrew 6th month (early August to early Sept this year) IS a time to be repenting, begging for God's mercy, establishing as close a relationship with our Father in heaven as we can, and to be seeking Him in prayer as never before.

There's MORE! Much more.

THE 6TH MONTH AND THE REBUILDING OF THE HOUSE OF GOD

It was also in this 6th month when HAGGAI was told to arouse the people's interest in rebuilding the house of God. The 2nd temple had begun, but then stopped. People got more interested in building and fixing up their own homes than in building the house of God. As we read a couple verses in Haggai, remember the called-out ones – the ekklesia – is now the house of God.

Notice the timetable:

Haggai 1:1-11

In the second year of King Darius, **in the sixth month, on the first day of the month,** the word of YHVH came by Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying,

2 "Thus speaks YHVH of hosts, saying: 'This people says, "The time has not come, the time that YHVH's house should be built.'"

3 Then the word of YHVH came by Haggai the prophet, saying,

4 "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?"

5 Now therefore, thus says YHVH of hosts: "Consider your ways!

6 "You have sown much, and bring in little; You eat, but do not have enough; You drink, but you are not filled with drink; You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; And he who earns wages, Earns wages to put into a bag with holes."

7 Thus says YHVH of hosts: "Consider your ways!

8 Go up to the mountains and bring wood **and build the temple**, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified," says YHVH.

9 "You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. **Why?" says YHVH of hosts. "Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house.**

10 Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit.

11 For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands."

What is the house of God today? It's the church. **1 Timothy 3:15** – Paul tells Timothy that he needs to learn how to conduct himself "in **the house of God, which is the church of the Living God.**"

So when you read Haggai 1 and 2, when you read "House of God" – read "the church" in there and apply it to today as well.

What state is the church in right now? GOD tells us in Haggai 1. It's in ruins, IN shambles. Are we doing all we can to bring unity back into the body, to rebuild the House of God? Are you praying about that? Does it ever even cross your lips? Are you working at being a gatherer, instead of a

scatterer? I wrote a blog on that recently. I hope you're looking at the blogs, as that is something we're ramping up more and more. A lot of good food for thought there in short essays.

Back then, on the 24th day of the 6th month, which is getting pretty close to the time I'm speaking this, the people began to ACT.

Haggai 1:14-15

So Yehoweh stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God,
15 on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of King Darius.

I believe that's an example for US. We need to be coming together and praying about the state of the House of God. And I don't mean the way I hear one man is explaining. There's someone out there claiming to be Joshua the High priest and HE believes everyone is supposed to come under his direction and his group. No, that's not the way it's going to work. But we indeed DO have to come together.

MOSES AND THE 6TH MONTH

We know that Moses went up for 40 days and nights when Yehoweh appeared in a fiery/smoky display at the top of Mt Sinai in Arabia (Gal. 4:25). YHVH thundered out the 10 commandments – and it scared the people – and so they pleaded for Moses to be their intermediary (Exodus 20:18-21). So the children of Israel cut a covenant with Yehoweh (Exodus 24:1-8), God then calls up the 70 elders and Aaron and Moses and the oldest sons of Aaron on to the mountain to eat and drink with God, though from a distance (see Ex. 24:9-11).

So a little time has elapsed, but it's all around the Pentecost season and past. THEN God calls for Moses to come to the top of the mountain where He would be given the 10 commandments. Moses was up there hearing God's laws and teachings for 40 days and 40 nights.

Exodus 24:12-18

Then YHVH said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them."

13 So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up to the mountain of God.

14 And he said to the elders, "Wait here for us until we come back to you. Indeed, Aaron and Hur are with you. If any man has a difficulty, let him go to them."

15 Then Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain.

16 Now the glory of YHVH rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud.

17 The sight of the glory of YHVH was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel.

18 So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain FORTY days and forty nights.

At the end of those 40 days and nights is when Moses is ordered back down the mountain (Exodus 32) – and is presented with the golden calf and the lewd worship going on. Moses breaks all 10 commandments (Ex. 32:19), dashes the 2 tablets into small pieces – and 3,000 Israelites are slain.

The nation is stunned by how quickly they had turned from YHVH. After a time, Moses is called back up the mountain – for another 40 days. (Exodus 34)

It could fit the timetable, and it's the traditional timing as explained by the Jews, *that it was on the first of Elul, the 6th Hebrew month, when Moses went back UP the mountain* to have God write once more on 2 new tablets. Again, he's up there for another 40 days and 40 nights – this time PLEADING for mercy for Israel.

Back in the camp, the children of Israel are also pleading for mercy and forgiveness, praying for Moses' success in convincing God not to wipe out the whole nation in His anger.

So it is believed by many that it was during this sixth month we're in now that Israel was praying, petitioning, beseeching the Great God we have to hear their prayers, to forgive their sins, to continue to reveal himself to them – while Moses was up in Mt. Sinai for the second 40 days and 40 nights.

Guess when the 40 days were fulfilled? If Moses went up on the 1st of the 6th month, then 40 days later would be on the 10th of the 7th month – and that is the day of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. It was on the Day of Atonement that God announces through Moses, FORGIVENESS and reconciliation between Israel and their God. Remember that Yom Kippur means “the Day of Covering.”

This is also partly why Jews to this day call the days between the Feast of Trumpets and Yom Kippur “the 10 days of Awe”. It was and is a time of deep repentance and seeking after God. That's what we're supposed to be focusing on during this 6th month!

It is also during this month that the Torah readings are centering on the book of Deuteronomy – including all the verses about removing all the unclean things from the camp and from their nation and their lives. This included all the sexual laws of Deuteronomy 22 for example. In several cases, Yehoweh gives a command of some of the evil to stomp out and ends with “Thus you shall purge - put away—ALL the evil from among you” (Deut 21:21; 22:21, 22, 24; 24:7; 23:14). I suggest you look up and read all the preceding verses, or even Deut 21- to the end of the book.

YHVH even says this –cover up your filth when you have to relieve yourself outside the camp. Make a hole, cover it up. WHY? Obviously for sanitation reasons, but also there's more. As I read this next verse, hear it also spiritually:

Deuteronomy 23:14

For Yehoweh your Elohim walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you and give your enemies over to you; **therefore your camp shall be holy, that He may see no unclean thing among you, and turn away from you.**

Think spiritually. When Yehoweh looks at you and your life and mine, does He see any unclean thing among us? He says that makes Him turn away. This is a time of full repentance, of accepting the love and grace of our Master and His sacrifice. This is a time to ask for HIS righteousness to cover us, in Jesus' name. HE is the One worthy. HE is the One who must cover us and cover our failings and so when Father sees you and me, He sees the righteousness of Yeshua our Master.

One more thing: as we come to the 7th month and present ourselves before our Maker in praise and joyful worship at the Feast of Tabernacles, remember that for us to be accepted by HIM, we must be completely and totally **forgiving others**. THIS is something else we should be doing in this 6th month: asking Abba to give us His heart of love, His heart of grace and forgiveness – and to help you and me forgive those we really can't stand! It's a time to let go of the old "unforgivable" things done to us, for surely we have done some pretty hurtful things to others too.

Matthew 6:14-15 is very clear. If we don't forgive those who have hurt us and sinned against us, we will not be forgiven either by God.

This is the time for sons and fathers, mothers and daughters, Fathers and daughters – to be reconciled and reunited. This is the time to forgive ministers and brothers and sisters in Christ of anything they have done to you.

If we do so, brethren, then we too will be forgiven of all OUR sins by our heavenly father. Matthew 18 is very, very clear about this. I strongly urge you to read **Matthew 18:21-35**. In there you will read about forgiving others over and over and over – even 70 x 7 times. Then Yeshua follows it up with the story of the unforgiving servant and how he got smacked real hard for not forgiving other servants a tiny debt when HE had been forgiven a large one. Be sure to read all of Matthew 18.

Anyway, that's all for now. This is the message of the month we're in now – coming to the end of the 6th month in God's calendar.

- We're picturing the time when we're getting ready to meet our God. So we need to be examining ourselves, repenting, drawing close to Him, as Joel tells us to. That's our focus – not physical things so much.
- This is the time to sigh and cry over the abominations in the land
- This is the time to be rebuilding the house of God. Start by being a gatherer of people, not a scatterer. Don't listen or read about negative gossip about other brothers and sisters in Christ.
- It's the time when all Israel was begging God for mercy – and that mercy was extended on the day of Covering, the Yom Kippur.
- And it's also the time to be sure we have forgiven everyone – everyone – from our hearts! Totally and completely. It's only when WE have forgiven others, that we ourselves will be forgiven.

So – let's enjoy the Festivals coming up. But let's enjoy them because we've PREPARED for them spiritually. So often we get so tired physically racing around trying to get everything done in time. Be sure this year you spend time seeking after God as never before as part of your pre-feast preparation.

Until next time, may our Great Yehoweh, our God and King, bless you and smile upon you. May He watch over you and keep you -- and bring you shalom – peace.

[I say a big, big hello to all of you who are now visiting this website from 50 countries. SO MANY of you are visiting this site from Russia, China, Japan, the Philippines, Kenya, as well as the USA. Welcome. I'd love to hear from some of you. Yehoweh bless you all. Tell your friends about this site.