

## פרשת האזינו / Parashat Ha'azinu

Shabbat Tishrei 12, 5768, October 11, 2008  
32:1-32:52 MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of G-d  
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### Countering religious hypocrisy?

#### השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Deuteronomy 32:1-32:52

הפטרה: 2 Samuel 22:1-51

הברית: Romans 10:14-11:12

החדשה

10 Recently, a few weeks ago, I got a really close encounter with my own  
mortality or in other words the “frailness of life.” Approximately two weeks ago  
I fell and fractured my eye socket over my right eye, broke some bones in my  
15 sinus cavity, bruised some ribs and fractured the bones in my right arm. I got a  
severe concussion and slight brain hemorrhaging which the doctors say has  
cleared up. During this time of recuperating (getting better) I have limited  
movement (my right arm), and I have reconsidered my own life in the sense of the  
things in which I took so much for granted. For example, I really took my own  
20 health for granted not considering so much the great blessing the Lord has given  
me with no health issues at all. Our lives are so frail and it is really easy to cause  
harm in the form of bodily injury. The accident I had recently comes at a very  
significant time. We are in the Days of Awe (ימים נוראים) just prior to Yom  
Kippur so this is a time of personal reflection and repentance. My injuries have  
25 significantly affected my understanding of this time before the Most High G-d in  
thankfulness in retrospect and my need for His forgiveness. Forgiveness is one of  
the most important issues we must deal with in life, not only in our relationships  
with others but most importantly in our relationship with G-d. During this time I  
really try to bring my life into perspective, I hope you do this too; by asking the  
30 question “am I a religious hypocrite?” In other words are my faith and my walk  
before the Most High G-d of Yisrael truly authentic? I hope you are asking  
yourself the same. In the Torah we find G-d’s forgiveness of Beni Yisrael (the  
children of Israel) over and over because of the rebellious nature or tendency that  
is common to all men and women. I believe everyone has these tendencies to be  
rebellious before G-d and it is something we need to seriously consider in our  
35 hearts. This week’s parsha I would like to look at little bit at religious hypocrisy.

35 In last week’s parsha, Parashat Vayeilech, I am sure Beni Yisrael was quite  
depressed after HaShem summoned Moshe and Yehoshua to the Ohel Moed  
(Tabernacle) to inform them that Yehoshua was going to take over leadership.  
HaShem also said to Moshe that you will soon die and further that the nation  
would go astray after strange gods of the land and break the covenant. This sets  
40 the stage for this week’s parsha, Parashat Ha’azinu, where the Lord said to write  
down this Shir (song) and teach it to Beni Yisrael in order that this song is a  
witness against the people of Yisrael. HaShem said for when I bring them to the  
land flowing with milk and honey as I swore to their forefathers and they will eat

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and become satiated and grow fat and then turn to other gods and worship them hence breaking My covenant. It appears then that as these things befall Yisrael this song would confront them as a witness which would never be forgotten (See *Devarim / Deuteronomy 31:19-21*).

So let's look for a moment at the text, the beginning of Parashat Ha'azinu:

**שָׁ לֵב הָאֲזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶדְבָּרָה וְתִשְׁמַע הָאָרֶץ אִמְרֵי־פִי: פֶּרֶשׁ**

2 יַעֲרֶף כַּמָּטָר לִקְדָּוִי  
 3 כִּשְׁעִירִים עַל־דָּשָׁא  
 4 הַצֹּדֵר הַמִּים פִּעְלוּ  
 5 אֵל אֲמוּנָה וְאֵין עוֹל  
 6 הִ לְיִהוּהָ תִגְמְלוּ־זֹאת  
 7 הֲלוֹא הוּא אֲבִיךָ בְּנֵה  
 8 זָכַר יְמוֹת עוֹלָם  
 שְׁאַל אֲבִיךָ וַיַּגִּיד  
 בְּהִנָּחַל עֲלוּיֵן נוֹיִם  
 יַצַּב גְּבֻלַת עַמִּים

וְתִשְׁמַע הָאָרֶץ אִמְרֵי־פִי: פֶּרֶשׁ  
 תִּגְלַל כַּפְּטַל אִמְרֵתִי  
 וְכַרְבִּיבִים עַל־עֵשֶׂב:  
 הֲבֵנו גְּדַל לְאֵלֵהֵינוּ:  
 כִּי כָל־דְּרָכֵינוּ מִשְׁפַּט  
 צְדִיק וְיֵשֶׁר הוּא:  
 דּוֹר עֲקָשׁ וּפְתִלְתִּיל:  
 עִם נָכַל וְלֹא חָכֵם  
 הוּא עֲשָׂה וַיִּכְנַעַהּ:  
 בֵּינו שְׁנוֹת דֶּרֶךְ־דָּר  
 וַיִּכְנַעַהּ וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ:  
 בְּהַפְרִידוּ בְּנֵי אָדָם  
 לְמִסְפָּר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

כי  
 v. 28 וְאֵינִיךָ בְּרֵאשׁ עֵמוֹד סִימֵן בְּיַה שְׁמוֹ.  
 v. 30 שֵׁם הַפֶּרֶשָׁה [XXXI 30-XXXIX 9] אֲדַלִּיָּהּ. וְסִדְרִיהָ ג' אֲתָם נִצְבִים [XXIX 9], כִּי הַמְצוּהוּ הַזֹּאת [XXX 11], וַיֹּאמֶר י"י אֶל־מֹשֶׁה [XXXI 14]. וּפְסוּקִים שְׂבָעִים. וּמִלִּים אֶלֶף וּמֵאָתַים וְעֶשֶׂר. וְאוֹתוֹת אַרְבַּעַת אֲלָפִים וְשֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת וְתִשְׁעִים וְשִׁמְנָת, וְחֻלּוֹף א' אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי חֲלוֹף [XXXI 21], כִּי קוֹרָא נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי בַּפֶּתַח תַּחַת הַכִּיּוֹת וּבִיג נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי בְּקִמְצַן תַּחַת הַבִּיּוֹת. וּבִלֹּא חֲלוֹף אֶל־הַאֲדוּמָה בִּלְא גַעִיא [XXXI 20]. וּפְסָק א' לְמַעַן הִקִּים אוֹתָךְ [XXIX 12]. וְכַת' א' תְּבָבִים [XXIX 22].  
 לב. v. 1 הַפֶּסֶק וַיִּדְבֵר דּוֹד לֵת: שְׂמוֹאל ב' כִּיב כַּמְנַהֵג הַסְּפָרָדִים, שׁוֹכֵה בְּהַשְׁעוֹ יִד, ב' תַּקְעוּ שׁוֹפָר בְּיוֹאֵל ב' כַּמְנַהֵג הַאֲשַׁכְּנַזִּים. v. 5 כֵּן בְּרוּב סְפָרִים כִּי, דִּיא וְדִיא, בְּמוֹנֵה יֵלֵא רַפִּי וְכֵן דִּיב, דִּיג, חֲדִיָּה, דִּיב, דִּייד וְדִטִּי. v. 5 פ' רַבְתִּי. v. 6 ה' רַבְתִּי. כֵּן לְמוֹרָאֵי הִ לַחֹד לַיְהוָה לַחֹד, לְנַהֲרַעֲנֵי תֵל לַחֹד לַחֹד יֵהָת לַחֹד וְכֵן כַּסְפֵּר עֲזוּרָא. וּבַסֵּא הַלִּיְהוָה מֵלֵא הֲדֵא. v. 6 גִּיא בִּיג וְכַנְנַךְ בִּלְא גַעִיא.

**Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:1-8**  
 32:1 'Give ear, O heavens, and let me speak; And let the earth hear the words of my mouth. 32:2 'Let my teaching drop as the rain, My speech distill as the dew, As the droplets on the fresh grass And as the showers on the herb. 32:3 'For I proclaim the name of the Lord; Ascribe greatness to our God! 32:4 'The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He. 32:5 'They have acted corruptly toward Him, They are not His children, because of their defect; But are a perverse and crooked generation. 32:6 'Do you thus repay the Lord, O foolish and unwise people? Is not He your Father who has bought you? He has made you and established you. 32:7 'Remember the days of old, Consider the years of all generations. Ask your father, and he will inform you, Your elders, and they will tell you. (NASB)

**Mesorah Notes v 6:**  
 ה is enlarged, and so for the Syrians ה is separated from ליהוה separated, to the Nehardaeans (a district of Babylonia) ה is separated from יהוה separated, and thus in the book of Ezra. And in ספר אהר, ספרים אחרים the word is one word הליהוה

Interestingly Parashat Ha'azinu begins by Moshe calling Shamayim (Heavens) and Aretz (Land) treating them as actual witnesses who will enforce the covenant (See *Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:1*). The implication is that someone will always be watching should Beni Yisrael break the covenant including G-d. While reading these verses it seems in the midst of blessing, Beni Yisrael may take the mercy of G-d for granted.

60 **In this time of personal reflection have you considered though  
people don't see your heart G-d does and knows your deepest  
secrets!**

65 Today, just like Beni Yisrael, we should ask ourselves: "Do I take for granted  
the mercy of G-d?" As believers we need to look really hard at our hearts and  
examine ourselves for religious hypocrisy. Why ... because, our religious  
devotion is worthless if our hearts are not right. Does your life demonstrate that  
you are a member of His holy kingdom?

70 Reading further in the text Moshe Rabbeinu hit the "nail on the head" in 32:5-  
6.

75 ***Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:5-6***

*32:5 'They have acted corruptly toward Him, They are not His children,  
because of their defect; But are a perverse and crooked generation. 32:6  
'Do you thus repay the Lord, O foolish and unwise people? Is not He your  
Father who has bought you? He has made you and established you.  
(NASB)*

80 In verse 5, Moshe makes an accusation saying you are a perverse and crooked  
generation. Interestingly the פ is enlarged providing some emphasis on the word  
פתלתל means "twisted" which the NASB chose to translate as "crooked." פתלתל  
is among the "doubled root-letter" words in which the last two letters of the root  
are repeated. It appears the doubling of the Hebrew letters is done so for  
emphasis in the sense that the root word is פתל meaning "to twist" and פתלתול  
meaning "twisted." The emphasis may mean "you are twisters" or "you are  
85 perverters" which is an interesting and serious accusation made by Moshe to the  
people. I feel this is interesting because it appears to characterize the hearts of the  
people.

90 Next I would like to look at Rabbi Shlomo ben Yitzchak's (רש"י) commentary  
on these verses. Sometimes Rashi presents an interesting perspective on the basic  
meaning of the text. So, it might be instructive to see also what Rashi has to say  
on these verses.

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105 **Rashi on Devarim 32:5-6**

(ה) שחת לו וא'. כתרגומו חבילו להון פ ולא ליה: בניו מומם. בניו היו. ז והשחתה שהשחיתו היא מומם. בניו מומם. מומם של בניו היה. ק ולא מומו: דור עקש. עקום ומעוקל. כמו ואת כל הישרה יעקשו (מיכה ג. ט). ובלשון משנה. חולדה ששיניה עקומות ועקושות: ופתלתל. אנטורטייליש (פערדרעהט) כפתיל הזה שגודלין אותו ומקיפין אותו סביבות י הגדיל. פתלתל. מן התיבות הכפולות. כמו ירקרק. אדמדם. סחרחר. סגלגל: (ו) הלה' תגמלו זאת. לשון תימה. וכי לפניו אתם ש מעציבין. שיש בידו להפרע מכם ושהיטיב לכם בכל הטובות: עם ובל. ששכחו את העשוי להם. ולא חכם. להבין את הנולדות שיש בידו להיטיב ולהרע: הלא הוא אביך קנר. שקנאך. ה שקננך \* בקן הסלעים ובארץ חזקה. שתקנך בכל מיני תקנה: הוא עשך. אומה \* באומות: ויכונך. אחרי כן בכל מיני בסיס י וכן. מכם כהנים. מכם נביאים. ומכם מלכים. י כרך שהכל תלוי בו: (ז) זכור ימות

110 Interestingly Rashi ties together these two verses by discussing the blemish of his children in that they are a crooked and twisted generation who bend all that is straight and then asking the question that is posed in verse 6. Is it HaShem that you repay this? This expresses astonishment. It is a rhetorical question. The verse means is it before Him that you cause anguish? He who has in His power to take His due from you, and who benefited you with all manner of goodness?

115 Looking at the text in verse 6, we find the ה is enlarged drawing emphasis to verse 6 similarly to that in verse 5. Looking at the Masorah we see there is slight variance between the different traditions involving this enlarged ה. The Masorah says some traditions have the word as one word הליהוה, the Babylonian tradition separates הל from יהוה, and the Syrian tradition has it as we see it here in the text. The ה introduces a question and is usually vowelized with a chataf patach. It is suggested that the ה introduces a question and this is the traditional translation of the text with a question on how we repay the Lord.

120 Rashi follows the Targum Onkelos when he says “is it before Him that you cause anger” rather than the more direct translation “do you cause him anger” to indicate that man brings upon himself this shameful conduct and brings upon himself G-d’s anger. This shameful conduct is specifically that of disobedience to the Lord.

130 The song in this week’s parsha is wholly about our disobedience verses our obedience before the Lord. The parsha speaks about obedience and what will happen if we fall out of obedience with the Lord. Moshe said in verse 5 the people are crooked and twisted. The lewd imaginations of the people deceive them and G-d sees the crooked and twisted imaginations. Now I don’t know if you have noticed this before but a significant portion of the bible actually addresses this issue. This is what is called religious hypocrisy and one such example is found in Proverbs 21:1-5:

**Proverbs 21:1-5**

*21:1 The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes. 21:2 Every man's way is right in his own eyes, But the Lord weighs the hearts. 21:3 To do righteousness and*



**Masorah (מסורה)** refers either to the transmission of a religious tradition, or to the tradition itself. In a broad sense the term can refer to the entire chain of Jewish tradition: In a narrow sense the term refers to the tradition of the Masoretes used in determining the precise text of the Tanach.

140 *justice Is desired by the Lord more than sacrifice. 21:4 Haughty eyes and  
a proud heart, The lamp of the wicked, is sin. 21:5 The plans of the  
diligent lead surely to advantage, But everyone who is hasty comes surely  
to poverty. (NASB)*

145 Here we find a very interesting portion of scripture which appears to say  
obediance is better than sacrifice. These passages however do not  
denigrate/belittle the importance of sacrifice. Rather throughout the scriptures  
HaShem opposes “Religious Hypocrisy” and formal outward observance of  
150 religious ritual. The Lord would rather have our simple obedience than lengthy  
prayers and costly sacrifices. If our hearts are not right with Him (i.e. crooked  
and twisted) what good is our religious expression? The Lord prefers that we do  
what he says rather than sin, repent, and bring sacrifice for our sins. The fact is  
however that we do sin and we all need atonement for our sins which is the  
subject that the scriptures affirm and teaches and Yeshua the Messiah ultimately  
155 fulfills.

Now the traditional teaching in Judaism on the purpose of this week’s parsha is  
to help Beni Yisrael react to situations of national catastrophe. It is believed the  
Goal of Chumash (The Torah) is that we should never need to experience a  
sequence of events as described in this song. However the song remains as an  
160 eternal reminder for Am Yisrael to remember their covenant and purpose. As we  
see here there appears to be a sequence of deeds which lead to remaining in the  
covenant and thus salvation by G-d. But looking closer at the text we find that the  
deeds require our hearts to be correct and not corrupted and twisted. Interestingly  
this is the very thing that characterizes the Messianic Jewish faith view of Yeshua  
165 (Jesus) death. A typical misunderstanding of faith in Yeshua was that by simply  
believing upon the Messiah Yeshua that he died for our sins that he gave himself  
as a perfect sacrifice on our behalf that now moral living is no longer important.  
The typical opinion by non-believers is that the messianic faith is just a religion of  
creed. This is not the case. Messianic Jewish faith is one that is both a creed and  
170 also of deed. Some argue that our emphasis on Yeshua’s sacrificial death  
completely undercuts and overshadows our emphasis on morality and holiness. If  
you ask a orthodox Jew what is the most important thing regarding his faith he  
will tell you that it is observing the Torah, in other words doing what is just and  
right like it says in proverbs 21:3.

175 Proverbs 21:3 and other scriptures which talk about being just, righteous,  
offering our lips or praise rather than sacrifice, in each of these instances the Lord  
is counteracting the attitude of religious hypocrisy that takes refuge in the  
observance of ceremonies while at the same time one lives in greed, lust,  
selfishness, hate for others, lies, idolatry, etc. This verse could just as easily been  
180 written to say “to do what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord than  
saying your prayers or attending synagogue, giving charity, or studying the  
Talmud.” If you study the scriptures closely you will find the prophets spoke  
loudly against religious hypocrites on the topics of prayer, observance of the  
Shabbat, the celebration of festivals and holy days along with the offering of  
185 sacrifices. Isaiah 29:13 says since with your mouths they drew near to the Lord  
but their hearts were far from him. HaShem despises this type of behavior.

190 Proverbs 15:8 says “The Lord detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the  
prayer of the upright pleases him,” do you see the contrast here between religious  
activity and the righteous whose hearts are right before the Lord? Did you know  
that there is a rabbinic concept on repentance, in order for repentance to have  
value it must be sincere? “He who says, I will repent, I will sin and repent,  
repentance is not vouchsafed (granted) to him (see *Yoma 8:9, note also Pesikta  
Rabbati 44a*). God prefers that you and I live right rather than lie, cheat, steal,  
hate, lust and then fast, pray, repent and offer sacrifices. He prefers obedience.

195 G-d prefers obedience rather than sacrifices of any kind just like it says in *1  
Samuel 15:22-23*: “Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as  
much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and  
heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and  
arrogance like the evil of idolatry.” Note in the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic  
200 Writings) Yeshua teaches the exact same thing.

**Mark 12:28-34**

205 *12:28 One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing  
that He had answered them well, asked Him, ‘What commandment is the  
foremost of all?’ 12:29 Jesus answered, ‘The foremost is, ‘Hear, O Israel!  
The Lord our God is one Lord; 12:30 and you shall love the Lord your  
God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind,  
and with all your strength.’ 12:31 ‘The second is this, ‘You shall love your  
neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.’  
210 12:32 The scribe said to Him, ‘Right, Teacher; You have truly stated that  
He is One, and there is no one else besides Him; 12:33 and to love Him  
with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength,  
and to love one’s neighbor as himself, is much more than all burnt  
offerings and sacrifices.’ 12:34 When Jesus saw that he had answered  
215 intelligently, He said to him, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God.’  
After that, no one would venture to ask Him any more questions. (NASB)*

**Hebrews 13:15-16**

220 *13:15 Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to  
God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. 13:16 And do  
not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is  
pleased. (NASB)*

225 So basically what can we get from this week’s Parsha? In this time of year,  
and in light of the parsha we are dealing with a time of “Teshuva” (repentance  
and return) as we contemplate a new resolve to not perform bad deeds and the  
challenge before us to modify the condition of our hearts / minds before the Lord  
in such a way as to be pleasing to Him. Ask yourself “am I a religious  
hypocrite?” One way to figure out if you are a religious hypocrite is by  
230 examining your life along side what scripture says the fruits of a believer should  
have (are you living the fruits of the spirit). Let’s see what the apostle Shaul  
(Paul) wrote in Galatians.

**Galatians 5:19-24**

235 *5:19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 5:20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, **strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,** 5:21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 5:22 **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,** 5:23 **gentleness, self-control;** against such things there is no law. 5:24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (NASB)*

245 Is your life characterized by strife (conflict, friction, discord, and disagreement), jealousy, and outbursts of anger? Discontentment and outbursts of anger towards others can be a sign of a serious spiritual condition that needs to be addressed. Does it matter whether you feel you have good reason to be angry?

250 Have you said: “This other person place or thing has done something so wrong and this is my righteous anger?” Have you used this statement correctly or out of a reason to simply justify your actions?

I would like to end with what the Apostle Shaul (Paul) said in *Romans 15:1-5*:

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**Romans 15:1-5**

*15:1 Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. 15:2 Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. 15:3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, ‘The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.’ 15:4 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. 15:5 Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, (NASB)*

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In *Romans 15:4* it says that whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, Shaul (Paul) is being very rabbinic here because this sounds very similar to what is taught traditionally in Judaism. Sometimes we find parallelisms between what is taught in the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings) and what is taught in Judaism and in *Romans 15:4* this is one such case. What was written in the past is meant to draw our attention to our hearts at an important time of year. Are our hearts pure before G-d or are they twisted and crooked? As believers in Yeshua, shouldn't our hearts be pure? We need to strive toward that goal. Let's ask the Lord to help us to persevere, and to encourage us to do what is right in His yes in Yeshua the Messiah's name.

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Remember, it is written, that Yeshua said “I will stand at the door of your heart and knock...” (see *Luke 11:9-13* and *Revelation 3:20*). The heart obviously is a key theme in the scriptures. Yeshua is the way the truth and the life (*John14:6*)

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and so if you are having trouble the fruits of the spirit, ask the Lord in Yeshua's name and He will help you to begin to change your heart and live a life that is pleasing before G-d. The very first step is to believe upon Yeshua, that his blood was shed for our sins to make atonement for our sins between man and G-d.  
285 Interesting isn't it how Yom Kippur is a time for national atonement between man and G-d. If you want atonement today before G-d, an actual blood atonement you can have it, just say the following prayer with me.

290 Heavenly Father,

I don't want to rebel against you or continue in any religious hypocrisy, I desire to live a life that is pleasing to you starting today. In the past I have occasionally chosen the path of rebellion. I desire to be at peace with you today Lord; I have come to understand Yeshua was sent to make peace between us. I believe and trust Yeshua offered his blood to make atonement for my sins according to your Holy Torah. I ask in Yeshua's name please forgive me of my past rebellious behavior and sins. Come into my life and be Lord and King over all that I do. Thank you for such a wonderful salvation you have provided for me today in your Messiah Yeshua.

300 In Yeshua's name I pray all these things. Amen!

If you have said this prayer praise the Lord you are now a part of a wonderful family and a child of the Most High God. The next step is to get yourself into a Messianic congregation near you; I would like to also invite you to come to [www.inspeak.com](http://www.inspeak.com), go to the "Messianic Believers" section, "CTOMC" rooms. Together we can learn more about our faith in Yeshua

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**Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!**

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הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:  
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,  
"Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever