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What Will It Take?



By Eitan Shishkoff

We are entering the tenth month of a seemingly endless war against the Hamas terrorists. Simultaneously, we are pounded daily by Hezbollah's bombardments that have emptied our northern communities and turned that border into one long army base. Our heart's cry is:

"ENOUGH! Lord, where are you? We're longing for life where we see death. Wouldn't this be an ideal time for the outpouring of your power, while souls are parched and thirsty for hope beyond human means?"

I'm asking, what will it take to bring the great "latter rain" revival we see in the prophecies of Joel, Isaiah, Ezekiel and others? On our part, I mean. Certainly, it is in the hand of the Sovereign Lord to do the pouring.

"And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh...I will pour out my Spirit in those days...before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD" (Joel 2:28,29,31).

But what's our part? Yes, we need to be pure of heart, exercising faith, praying, fasting, and humbling ourselves before our God. Is there a missing key? A human factor God requires?

Upper Room Posture

Yeshua's disciples give us a simple, disarmingly achievable condition that brought the original outpouring 2000 years ago around this time of year. The Master told them to wait in Jerusalem until they would be clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:49). They obeyed. In Acts 1 and 2 we see the 120 gathered, praying "in one accord." A mighty wind fills the place, tongues of fire appear above their heads, and they begin praising God with languages they never knew.

Not long before, they argued about who among them was the greatest (Luke 22:24). Somechutzpah, right? Squabbling over position in front of the Perfect Man. The barrier blocking that initial outpouring of the Spirit was their disunity, jealousy, and comparison. To our dismay, these issues remain among us.

Sobered and rejoicing over their Master's resurrection, they now waited, fully available. Seeking the Lord with open, surrendered, united hearts – they eagerly anticipated what He would do next. Aha! That's it. They were available. They'd opened their lives, saying in effect:

"Here I am Lord. Do what you want with me. You've more than earned my total trust by dying an excruciating death and rising from the grave. I'm yours. 100%."

We know that they went on to "turn the world upside down" with a powerful proclamation of the gospel. In Israel and beyond, tens of thousands were swept into the Kingdom by the magnetism of the Ruach operating through them, because they were unconditionally available.

HINENI!

This declaration "Here I am" zaps me back to Isaiah's experience of seeing the LORD high and lifted up. Not only were the door posts of the temple shaken, the prophet was shaken to the core. He cried out in despair, realizing the depth of his own impurity, confronted with a heart-stopping vision of God's unstained glory. To the rescue comes an angel with fire from heaven's altar. **"Behold...your iniquity is taken away, and your sin atoned for"** (Isaiah 6:7). Now, there's an unlikely question for the freshly convicted sinner. God asks **"Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"** Isaiah's response also answers the question "What will it take?"

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Jubilee



By Leon Mazin



“Consecrate the fiftieth year, proclaiming freedom throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It will be a jubilee for you; you will return everyone to his inheritance, and everyone is to return to his family.” (Leviticus 25:8-15)

Notice these elements:

- Proclamation publicly announced;
- Liberation of slaves/set the oppressed free – in the modern context it means to resolve the issue of debts);
- Returning to one's inheritance/possession – can also mean to realize one's gifts and talents in the Spirit of Messiah;
- Returning to our families – prioritizing for family and maintaining family unity;

Let's focus on returning to the family and restoration of the family. How relevant and important that here in Leviticus God gives a command to prioritize for family. When the zeal of the Lord comes to us, we start serving everyone around us with great enthusiasm and sometimes our family suffers. Pouring all our strength into giving to others can cause an imbalance and a lack of attention to loved ones closest to us. As time goes on, this weakens the family connections. I believe that many families have been damaged or broken due to a history of such behavior. Some members of these wounded families have struggled with or even left their faith.

Yeshua is God's all-encompassing jubilee proclamation. He took our pain and bore our suffering on the cross. Consequently He can bring healing to our families because the essence of “jubilee” has entered our homes and our relationships with our children and spouses. I want to encourage you to take these words to heart, to activate and strengthen your faith in His plan to bring wholeness to your families!

Current ministry activities:

- A retreat day in June for our three congregations Shavei Tzion, Or Chai and Netzer ha-Galil with a joint picnic, water immersion and rest for all. (The war puts great emotional pressure on everyone, so I kindly ask you to pray for us.)
- In May and June we held workshops and training sessions for believers and non-believers, to shine His light.
- We are also arranging many activities for our youth. It's very important to encourage them in their walk with the Lord, draw them away from negative aspects of their social circles, and dedicate them to the Messiah. We ask you to pray for us to reach this goal, not with our own strength and abilities but under the leadership and help of the Spirit of God.
- Humanitarian projects for elderly people with disabilities, for new immigrants and for the needy are continuing according to their regular schedule. It's a big blessing to “give them bread” and we manage to do this thanks to your participation in these projects.
- The Music School “Keshet Tzilim” continues to operate as well, and we see more and more new people. I kindly ask you to pray for this project and its financing. The students' tuition fee is only 45-55% of the cost, and the remaining part is the financial support from those who believe in the spiritual importance of this project.

I pray for God's abiding peace and guidance for each of you!

Return to Zion Congregation

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Last Days Strategy



By Guy Cohen

I am convinced that wherever we currently stand in the timeline of events called the “last days,” our first and best strategy is to draw closer to Yeshua. The battle will be won only through power from above, claiming our individual identity as a child of God.

There is no room for worry and fear. Those are not our inheritance. Our inheritance can be found in the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These are also some of the weapons available to us in the battle against the attack of Satan. We encourage ourselves by remembering Paul’s words.

“If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31)

On the other hand, if Satan succeeds in pulling us into a state of confusion, focusing on the problems before us, he may eventually succeed in disrupting our relationship with Yeshua. The enemy knows when, where and how to attack for the sole purpose of catching us off guard and turning us against ourselves with thoughts of self-doubt and judgement. God forbid that these thoughts will lead us to question all that He has told us He will do through our lives and even what He has already done.

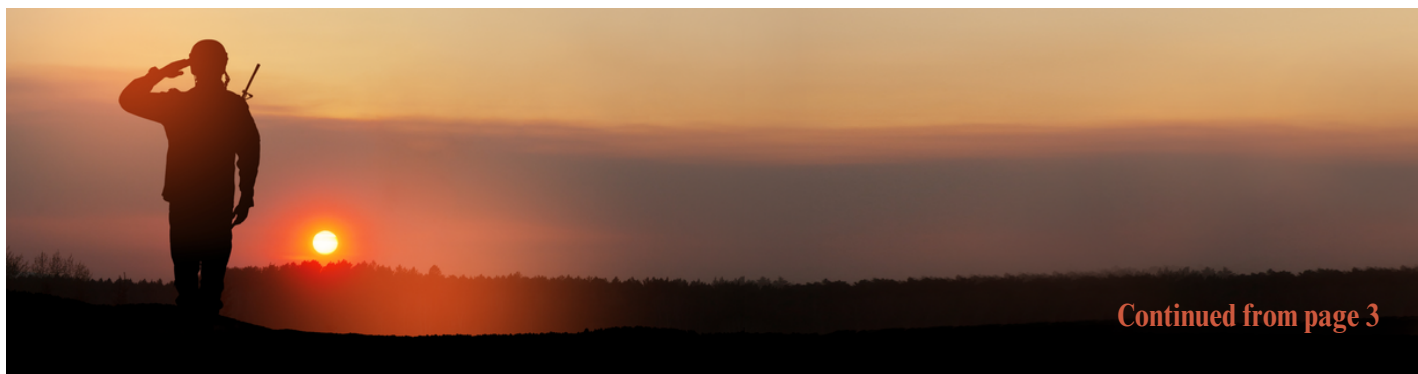
Again, recognizing the truth of who we are in Messiah Yeshua, which builds our faith, is the way to change gears and shake the dust off ourselves. In this way we rest in Him and are renewed in our spirit man. We are still aware of the challenges we face, but we separate ourselves from them in mind and spirit by releasing them to God.

As we stand in the war against ungodly thoughts, we may fall but we will get back up. Satan wants us to stay hiding in a “corner” where we will be ineffective in the gifts and strengths God has given us. It is our choice whether we remain there or not. Paul reminds us that we have freedom – liberty in Messiah; he exhorts us to:

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.” (Galatians 5:1 NKJV)

So let us not hold on to worries, fears, doubts and other ungodly things. Let’s release what we have been grasping, give it all to Yeshua and take hold of His hand. Step out from the corner of defeatism and despair. He is opening the Red Sea of life before us, we have only to walk through.





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“Here I am, send me” (Isaiah 6:8). In Hebrew it’s only one word – *Hineni*. Friends, could it be any simpler? God is looking for a messenger. In the ancient world carrying messages for a king was a position of honor and considerable responsibility. Are you available? Am I?

Yeshua raises the stakes even higher. Post-resurrection He tells the disciples *“As the Father has sent me, I also send you.”* And He breathed on them and said to them *“Receive the Holy Spirit”* (John 20:21, 22). You and I are also Yeshua’s disciples. That must mean that Israel’s King is also sending us as His messengers, with the “fuel-injection” of God’s Spirit.

Isaiah had a barrier that had to be dealt with before he could say *“Hineni – I’m unconditionally yours.”* That barrier was his inward uncleanness. Not a polite image, but like impacted bowels. His soul was fouled within. As the man confessed his state in that Holy Presence, the atonement of the LORD washed him clean. Now, he was available. Not through anything he achieved by self-effort. But in surrendering all. So it is with us.

History’s Quiet Turning Point

Some seven centuries after Isaiah, a Jewish maiden in an obscure village in the Galilean hills has an angelic visitation. Gabriel blows the poor girl away. *“Rejoice, highly favored one, the LORD is with you, blessed are you among women”* (Luke 1:28). Miriam is acutely distressed. Adding to the weirdness, the angel tells her that she’s going to conceive and bring forth a Son and call Him YESHUA. *“He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end”* (Luke 1:31-33).

Her reaction is *“Say WHAT?”* (only more respectful). *“This is not natural. I’ve had no intimate relations with a man. I have no grid for what you’re talking about.”* Is this not a barrier similar to what we say when God gives us an assignment that far exceeds our known capacity?

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you...for with God nothing will be impossible” Gabe replies. Pause. The text moves on without skipping a beat. But we must imagine Miriam digesting all of this in that moment. *“O.K. Even though he just told me it would be by God’s power, I have NO idea how this could possibly be. What’s more, I’m betrothed and this will be one major scandal that we’ll never recover from. This is way beyond me.”* Her barrier is human limitation. Nevertheless, she says...

“Behold, the maidservant of the Lord!” *Let it be according to your word.”* In other words, *“Here I am. Use me. I am entirely AVAILABLE for your purposes.”*

You know the rest of the story. Miriam is the human vessel through which divinity takes on the cloak of humanity to redeem all mankind and reign forever from Jerusalem. Weighty assignment, eh? What did it take? It took simple, total, trusting AVAILABILITY.

What Will It Take?

The disciples were available. They changed the world. Isaiah was available. He prophesied the coming of the Suffering Messiah. Miriam was available. She brought forth the Son of God, the Savior of the world.

Are you available? Am I? Or are we afraid to say *“Yes, I’m available. No preconditions. No escape clauses.”* Here’s the problem. We don’t like losing control. I hate not being in control. But God says:

“My grace is sufficient. My strength shows up best in weak vessels that freely acknowledge their need.”

What will it take for the Lord to POUR out His Spirit upon us and upon all flesh before the coming of the great and terrible Day of the LORD? What can possibly prepare the way? The disciples, Isaiah, and Miriam all reveal the answer. It is making our heart, our plans, our resources, our thoughts, our relationships, and all that we are AVAILABLE, totally YIELDED to Him.