

נצבים Nitzavim You are Standing

Deuteronomy 29.9(10)—30.20 / Isaiah 61.10-63.9 / Acts 19—23



Public Reading This portion is always read the Shabbat just before Rosh Hashanah/Trumpets.

Covenants At the beginning of Deuteronomy 31, Moses announces that on this 7th of Adar he is 120 years old. On this day which will also be his death-day, Moses retells the Covenant for those born in the wilderness and as a reminder for all those who were too young to understand 40 years earlier. On His last day on earth, **ישוע** *Yeshua* Jesus/Salvation formalizes the New Covenant and introduces the true bread and wine, His body and blood, of which the manna and sacrifices in the wilderness were pictures. Deuteronomy 34.7-8 says that when Moses dies, his eye is not dim nor his natural force weakened. Moses dies not out of weakness, but because God bars him from the Promised Land, which **ישראל** *Yisra'el* Israel will enter with **יהושע** *Yehoshua* Joshua.

In Joshua 1.1-2, God tells Joshua that Moses is dead—his body is hidden so it isn't obvious that he's dead—and it's time for Joshua to take the Land. Then in Joshua 4.19, the people come up out of the Jordan on the 10th of the first month, Nisan, the day when **ישראל** selects the Passover Lamb which must be without blemish, and which the whole congregation puts to death on the 14th of Nisan, Exodus 12.1-6. About 1,500 years later, the 10th of Nisan is the same day that **ישוע** enters Jerusalem four days before His death as the perfect Lamb. As Joshua must prepare to take the earthly Promised Land, **ישוע** is the spotless Lamb of God who prepares to take the eternal Promised Land.

Covenant Making In Deuteronomy 29, Moses clarifies that this covenant with God is with all **ישראל** *today*, adults and children, great and small, as well as with those *standing with Israel*, and also with him that is not here with us this day, verse 15 (14). In John 10.16 and John 17.20-23, **ישוע** extends His prayer, like Moses, to those not with Him that day—

You and ?!

These are our invitations to join the New Covenant with **ישראל**, expanded in Jeremiah 31.30-33 and quoted in Hebrews 8.7-11.

Blessings and Curses or Yada Yada Yada? In [Deuteronomy 28.1-14](#), Moses promises amazing blessings for obedience to תורה *Torah* Law/Instruction. Then Moses details horrible curses for disobedience to תורה. Moses warns again against breaking תורה in chapter 29, promises forgiveness for repentance from disobedience to תורה in chapter 30, and finishes chapter 31 knowing that ישראל will in fact break תורה after he dies.

So Jews know that if they are facing curses and punishment, they should *return* to תורה. Many Christians, on the other hand, promise blessings for *rejecting* תורה! “That’s just Old Testament! You’re free in Christ! Just believe and you’re in!” God’s Word has stood consistently for 3,500 years, but for the last 2,000, many in the Church say the complete opposite! After bringing destruction on ישראל several times for breaking תורה, does God really say now, “Aha! Now you’re in trouble if you KEEP תורה!?”



The Good Shepherd In [Deuteronomy 29.27](#) (28 in English), there is one of the titles שוע speaks about in וישלכם וישלכם וישלכם *vayashleechem* and He cast them, root word שלך *shalach* cast/throw away/fling, “... יהוה *YHVH* the LORD rooted them out of their Land in anger... and He cast them into another land...” The title is an oversized ל.

כֹּז וַיִּתְּשֵׁם יְהוָה מֵעַל אֲדָמָתָם, בְּאֵף וּבַחֲמָה וּבְקֶצֶף גָּדוֹל; וַיִּשְׁלַכֵם אֶל-
אֶרֶץ אַחֲרַת, כִּיּוֹם הַזֶּה.

oversized ל ↑ ↑ ל normal

The oversized ל *lamed* cattle goad/symbolically control/authority/tongue emphasizes that God, even in His anger, is still the Good Shepherd who cares for His people and will bring them back from destruction, and teach them the right way as well. שוע says in [John 10.11-14](#) that He is the Good Shepherd.

12	LAMED		CATTLE GOAD
5		control, authority, the tongue	1

Root of Bitterness [Hebrews 12.14-15](#) warns of a root of bitterness and we think that's a bitter heart, but [Deuteronomy 29.17](#) says a man, woman, clan, or tribe which turns away from God to serve idols is called a root of bitter poison. Such a person doesn't think this warning applies to him. Then in verse 18, disaster falls on the **רֹוּה** *raveh* watered as well as the **צמא** *tsame* thirsty/dry. **רֹוּה** is used in only two other verses, [Isaiah 58.11](#), God makes those in a sun-scorched land who trust in Him like a well-watered garden (sounds like [Psalm 1](#)), and [Jeremiah 31.12](#), when **ישראל** returns to the Land, they will be like a well-watered garden. **צמא** can be physical or spiritual thirst. Root out bitterness—before it causes trouble and defiles many.



God's Promise to **ישראל** In [Deuteronomy 30.5](#), God promises to return **ישראל** to the Land when they return in their hearts and repent of their evil ways. Deuteronomy 30.5 is the 5,708th verse in the Bible, beginning with Genesis 1.1 as verse #1. In Jewish year 5708, equivalent to 1948 AD, **ישראל** became a nation after nearly 2,000 years of exile.

Titles There are two examples of dots in Hebrew manuscripts which are not the ordinary vowel points over words. Some think these dots were put in by Ezra, others think they go all the way back to Moses. The first is in [Genesis 33.4](#), when Esau runs to meet **ישראל**/Jacob **וישקהו** *vayeeshaqhu* and kissed him. Each of the six letters has a dot over it. One explanation is that Esau's kiss was more of a bite, and the dots are teeth marks. The other passage is in this portion, [Deuteronomy 29.29](#) (29.28 in the Hebrew), The secret [things belong] unto **יהוה** our God: but those [things which are] revealed [belong] **לנו ולבנינו עד** *la'nu ulva'nay'nu ad* to us and to our children for-ever, that [we] may do all the words of the **תורה**. The dots over each letter except the **ד** *dalet* are explained different ways.



One interpretation is that the dots connect the two passages:

1. Jacob and his descendants **ישראל** each fear for the lives of their families.
2. As Jacob experienced “trouble” in meeting Esau and needed God's help to survive, so Jacob's Trouble, the time of the end, heralded by this portion read just before Rosh Hashanah/Feast of Trumpets, is another time when **ישראל** will need every help from God to survive.

Captivity, then **שוב** [Deuteronomy 30](#) says that after blessing and cursing have come,

- 1) **ישראל** will ([verse 1](#)) **שוב** *shuv* return (repent) in their **לבב** *levav* inner man/mind/will/heart/soul/understanding in all the nations where God has driven them,
- 2) ([verse 2](#)) **ישראל** will **שוב** with all their heart and soul to God and obey everything,
- 3) ([verse 3](#)) God will **שוב** (repent) and **שוב** (return) **ישראל** to the Land, and
- 4) ([verse 6](#)) **מול** *muwl* circumcise the **לבב** of **ישראל**.

So after **ישראל** turns away from God and they suffer, they will **שוב** first in their inner man, then to God with heart and soul, then **שוב** to the Land, and then God will heal **ישראל** in the inner man. And note that *circumcision of the heart* is not a concept created by the Apostle Paul in [Romans 2.29](#), but an ancient goal of **תורה**.

Circumcision is a personal, painful, and continual reminder of a radical commitment to the Covenant. It's a physical sign of being holy/set apart. In both Old and New Covenants, God wants the same change to happen to our hearts, something so dramatic that it's a continual reminder of belonging.



Month of Return Since this portion is always read the Shabbat before The Feast of Trumpets/Rosh Hashanah, which is the 1st of Tishri, this portion is always read in the month of **אלול** *Elul*, the month of preparation for the coming of the King. When [Deuteronomy 30.6](#) says that God will circumcise

את-לבבך ואת-לבב זרעך

et-levav'kha v'et levav zarehkha
your heart and the heart of your seed,

the first four letters of the words for your heart and the heart spelling **אלול**, this month.

When we **שוב in our **לבב** to God, God will **שוב** to us and **מול** us in our **לבב**.
Then we will be ready for the coming King, whose arrival will be announced with the trumpet call of God, [1 Thessalonians 4.16](#).**

שוב in the **לבב** Some say that the return of modern **ישראל** to the Land is not a fulfillment of prophecy because the nation is predominantly secular. But in [Ezekiel 36](#), God says in verse 24 that He will bring **ישראל** back to their Land, verse 25 cleanse them, [verse 26](#) give them a **לב חדש** *lev chadash* new heart, verse 27 put His Spirit in them to obey His statutes and ordinances, and verse 28 they will live in the Land, they will be His people, and He will be their God. So a change in the heart occurs both before and after the **שוב** to the Land.

Many of the original and current settlers already have a **שוב** to God in their hearts. I've talked with modern settlers in Judea and Samaria, which the press calls the "occupied west bank," and the only reason these settlers put up with Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, PLO, rockets, sniper attacks, and the world's disdain is because they are certain they are living where God wants them and their children to be and doing God's will. God can complete the **שוב** as **ישראל** lives in the Land.



Katya Adler of the BBC in September of 2009 wrote [The Rise of Israel's Military Rabbis](#) beginning, "Israel's army is changing. Once proudly secular, its combat units are now filling with those who believe Israel's wars are 'God's wars.'" One question asked is, "Should military motivation come from men of God, or from a belief in the state of Israel and keeping it safe?" Military rabbi Kaufman, who blew the shofar before an operation in Gaza says, "Our job was to boost the fighting spirit of the soldiers. The eternal Jewish spirit from Bible times to the coming of the Messiah." The trend worries some, however, who say the result will be jihad, holy war. One example is pamphlets comparing the Palestinians to Israel's ancient enemy the Philistines. In fact, I may have helped distribute those pamphlets to a base in the Golan in 2004! And scroll down on my [videos page](#) to see the video, *We Went into Gaza and God Went into Gaza with Us*.

"**שוב** to Me and I will **שוב** to you," promises God in [Malachi 3.7](#), and [Ezekiel 36.26-27](#) promises **ישראל** a new spirit and a heart of flesh to replace their heart of stone. Both prophecies also apply today, long after the Babylonian Exile. When we enter the New Covenant, we are grafting into these promises to **ישראל**. As a new believer, I remember recognizing that God was replacing my stony heart with a heart of flesh. We need this new spirit and heart to receive God's Word—to *hear* it and then to *do* it.

More to Come! Although we have seen a modern miracle in **ישראל** returning to the Land, more is promised. After announcing, “Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of **יהוה** is risen upon thee,” in verse 1 of [chapter 60](#), Isaiah says in verses 4-5 that the sons and daughters of **ישראל** will come from afar, their heart will **פחד** *pachad* fear/tremble/revere/dread/be in awe and be enlarged, the abundance of the sea and the forces of the **גוים** *goyim* (plural of **גוי** *goy*) Gentiles/nations will come to **ישראל**.

[Micah 4.1-3](#) also promises that many **גוים** will flow into the mountain of **יהוה**, and God will teach His ways, **ישראל** will walk in His paths, and the **תורה** will go forth out of Zion. *Then* the nations will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and there will be no more war. Nations (and many in the Church!) would like to skip the part about learning **תורה**.

Strangers Who Join **ישראל** In [Isaiah 56.1](#), God says to keep the **משפט** *mishpat* judgment/ordinance and do **צדקה** *tsedaqah* justice/righteousness, for **ישועתי** *Yeshua-tee* My Salvation is near (My **ישוע**, from the root **ישע** *yasha* to save/be saved/be delivered). So this verse hints at **ישוע** our Messiah. The first 39 chapters of Isaiah are usually the groan of suffering and the last 27 the glory of the coming Messiah.

[Isaiah 56.2](#) promises blessings to those who keep Shabbat and don't do evil. Then [verse 3](#) says that the son of the **נכר** *nekhar* foreign/foreigner who joins himself to **יהוה** (recall [Hebrews 8.8](#)) should not say, “**יהוה** has utterly separated me from His people.” Verses 6-8 go on to promise that the sons of the **נכר** who join themselves to **יהוה** to love Him, to be His servants, everyone who keeps from defiling Shabbat and takes hold of the covenant, will be accepted, “for My House will be called a House of Prayer for all nations.” This last part is quoted by **ישוע** as he cleans the Temple in [Mark 11.17](#). This is a promise today for us Gentiles!



Which Messiah? Many Jews expect two Messiahs, the suffering **בן יוסף** *Ben Yosef* Son of Joseph, and the conquering **בן דוד** *Ben David* Son of David, also known as **מלך** *Melech Ha'Mashiach* The Anointed King. These Messiahs should:

1. Restore the dynasty of King David
2. Rebuild the Temple
3. Gather the exiled of **ישראל**
4. Teach **תורה** to the **גוים**

ישוע fulfills these messianic expectations:

1. Descended from David in [Matthew 1](#), authority over heaven and earth in [Matthew 28.18-20](#). One day He will return as King, [Revelation 19.11-16](#).
2. In [John 2.19](#), **ישוע** promises to rebuild the Temple in three days, His body, but His listeners think he referring to Solomon's Temple. [Zechariah 6.12-13](#) says that the new Temple will be built by One Whose Name is The Branch and Who is also a Priest. Who is The Branch? In [Isaiah 11.1](#) Messiah is called the Root of Jesse and a **נצר** *netzer* Branch that will bear fruit. **ישוע** grew up in Nazareth and is called a Nazarene. **נצר** sounds like **נזיר** *natzir* consecrated/devoted one/Nazarite. **ישוע** is the **נצר**, and He builds the new Temple.
3. The **קִיבוּץ גְּלוּיּוֹת** *Kibbutz Galuyot* Ingathering of the Exiles has been happening for a century. Ezekiel's vision is a return from the Babylonian captivity, but his prophecy also covers the much greater return today. Leading up to Messiah in Ezekiel's Temple, [Ezekiel 20.41-42](#) says that God will be **קדש** *qadash* consecrated/sanctified/dedicated/hallowed when **ישראל** returns to the Land. When we pray as **ישוע** *teaches*, "Hallowed be Your Name," we also pray for the return of the exiles who will come from afar, [Isaiah 60.4-5](#).
4. Gentiles all over the world study **תורה** because of **ישוע**. In [Acts 15.12-18](#), James at the Jerusalem Council quotes the prophet [Amos 9.11-12](#), that they are living in the time of Gentiles turning to God. In verse 21, James continues that Moses is preached in the synagogues on every Shabbat. He assumes Gentile converts will get **תורה** as they continue to meet in synagogue. Gentiles stopped meeting in synagogues, but kept studying **תורה**. Now the Hebrew Roots movement is helping to restore the importance of **תורה**. [Micah 4.1-3](#) promises that many **גוים** will flow to the mountain of **יהוה**.

Jewish tradition anticipates two Messiahs at the same time;
believers in **ישוע** trust in one Messiah appearing twice.



Obey the Law and be Blessed [Deuteronomy 30.8-16](#) says that when יִשְׂרָאֵל finally will [verse 10](#) שׁוּב in body and לֵבָב, they will also do all the commandments. Paul quotes this passage along with two other verses in [Romans 10.5-13](#), about accepting שׁוּעַ for salvation. For Jew and Gentile, “Everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved.”

The Word is near—in your mouth and in your heart—that you may do it. That is the New Covenant: תּוֹרָה written on our hearts, [Jeremiah 31.33](#).

Know Your Hebrew Roots A passage at the end of Revelation is familiar to many of us, [Revelation 22.12](#), “And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward [is] with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.”

When we read this verse, we think that God is going to reward us for *our* work.

But in [Isaiah 62.11](#), God says to tell the daughter of Zion that her שׁוּעַ *yeshua* salvation, root of שׁוּעַ, comes, and His reward is with Him, and *His* work before Him. As [Philippians 2.13](#) says, it is *God* who works in us!

Glossary, in order of appearance:

נצבים	<i>Nitzavim</i>	You are Standing
ישוע	<i>Yeshua</i>	Jesus/Salvation
ישראל	<i>Yisra'el</i>	Israel
יהושע	<i>Yehoshua</i>	Joshua
תורה	<i>Torah</i>	Law/Instruction
וטשלכם	<i>vayashleechem</i>	and He cast them
שלך	<i>shalach</i>	cast/throw away/flip
יהוה	<i>YHVW</i>	the LORD
ל	<i>lamed</i>	cattle goad/symbolically control/authority/tongue
רוה	<i>raveh</i>	watered
צמא	<i>tsame</i>	thirsty/dry
וישקהו	<i>vayeeshaqhu</i>	and kissed him
לנו ולבנינו עד	<i>la'nu ulva'nay'nu ad</i>	to us and to our children for
ד	<i>dalet</i>	
שוב	<i>shuv</i>	return (repent)
לבב	<i>levav</i>	inner man/mind/will/ heart/soul/understanding
מול	<i>muwl</i>	circumcise
אלול	<i>Elul</i>	last month before Tishri
את-לבבך ואת-לבב זרעך	<i>et-levav'kha v'et levav zarehkh</i>	your heart and the heart of your seed
לב חדש	<i>lev chadash</i>	new heart
פחד	<i>pachad</i>	fear/tremble/revere/dread/be in awe and be enlarged
גוים	<i>goyim</i>	Gentiles/nations
גוי	<i>goy</i>	Gentile
משפט	<i>mishpat</i>	judgment/ordinance
צדקה	<i>tsedaqah</i>	justice/righteousness
ישועתי	<i>Yeshua-tee</i>	My Salvation
ישע	<i>yasha</i>	to save/be saved/be delivered

נכר	<i>nekhar</i>	foreign/foreigner
בן יוסף	<i>Ben Yosef</i>	Son of Joseph
בן דוד	<i>Ben David</i>	Son of David
מלך המשיח	<i>Melech Ha'Mashiach</i>	The Anointed King
נצר	<i>netzer</i>	Branch
נזיר	<i>natzir</i>	consecrated/devoted one/ Nazarite
ישע	<i>yesha</i>	salvation