

ROSH HASHANAH: REPENTANCE

(This message is the printed form of the radio transcript by the same title. Please note that the dates recorded within the text were current for the year when the message was first aired. For the correct dating of Rosh Hashanah today, see the Jewish Calendar link.)

Peace be to you, dear Jewish friends! We have prayed to the Lord God of Israel, that this program will be to your heart the gladness that you need, and that it will bring glory to God – The One, True, and Living God, The God of Israel, who said to our Jewish forefathers, quote: “They shall be my people and I will be their God.” End of quotation.

The Hebrew Christian Witness which presents this program at this time on this day weekly over this splendid station is an independent, non-denominational, and unaffiliated ministry to make known to Jewish people first the full truth of the Jewish Bible which includes the revelation that the God of the Jewish Bible can be known by us personally today! The Hebrew Christian Witness never charges for its services. It does not make solicitations. It has nothing to sell. It is a friend of the nation Israel, and of Jewish people wherever located. The official mailing address of the Hebrew Christian Witness is: Post Office Box Two, San Bernardino, California, zip nine two four zero two. Our telephone number is: area code 909, 883-3910. You are welcome to write to us, or to phone us direct or collect.

Sephardic Hebrew, and Jewish (Yiddish) shall be spoken in this radiocast. God willing, Hebrew Christian Witness Fellowship Meetings are held in San Bernardino and Riverside. You are invited to attend the meetings in your area. Write us or phone us for the date, time and location of your meeting.

Your speaker is Mike Perl. The subject of my message is: “Repentance.”

According to the Jewish calendar, this is the month “Elul.” It began at sundown on August 18th. In Jewish tradition, the month “Elul” is of especial spiritual and moral significance. This year it is a month of 29 days of “repentance” – preceding the High Holy Day of Rosh Hashanah or the new year of five thousand, seven hundred and sixty-five. In preparation for this Holy Day, observant Jewish people are to devote themselves to sincere and serious meditation upon the spiritual things of God: Repentance, reconciliation, restitution, prayer for pardon, benevolence, judgment, and Eternal life. During the latter part of this month of “Elul,” special prayers and supplications known as S’lihot are recited in the synagogues. They are devotions of confession of sin, and petitions for forgiveness.

The Day of Atonement regarded as the Holiest Day of the Year, will be observed from sundown Sept 24 to sundown Sept 25, preceded by what are known as the ten days of penitence. It is understood by Jewish people that this is a time during which one is to examine one’s heart in the light of the commandments of Torah, The Law. It is at this time that Jewish people retreat to a stream of flowing water to recite the “Tashlich” service; that is, to pray that God will cast their sins – their violations of the commandments of God, into the depths of the sea.

The matter of “Repentance” in regard to the Jewish Holy Days shall be considered at this time.

The underlying motive of “repentance” is that the Jewish person during this period is to make reconciliation with the Holy God, and with his fellowman. He is to resolve to live more nobly as a pious Jew in the coming year. The first of the ten days of penitence is the Day of Judgment, when according to Jewish tradition, not truth, the Creator remembers all His Jewish people in judgment, so His mercy is besought that one’s name might be written in the Book of Life, for another year. It is believed that this judgment can be changed through penitence, prayer and charity during the ten days from Rosh Hashanah, New Year, through the Day of Atonement, when the future is sealed. So it is that Jewish people greet each other personally or by card, by wire or phone with the words, “May you be inscribed and sealed for a happy year.” The Sabbath, between Rosh Hashanah, September 15, New Year and the Day of Atonement, is known as “The Sabbath of Repentance.” The Holiest Day of all, the Day of Atonement, the last of the ten days of penitence is known as the Sabbath of Sabbaths, whether or not it falls on the seventh day of the week.

It is a day of forgiving, forgetting, fasting, prayer for pardon, and abandoning of sin and sins. Thus it is that to God, the God of Israel, the Jewish person prays, “O may it be acceptable in thy presence, O Eternal, our God, and the God of our Fathers, to pardon all of our sins, and to forgive all of our iniquities, and grant us remission for all of our transgressions...for the sin, which we have committed against Thee with a stubborn heart, for the sin which we have committed against Thee out of ignorance, for the sin which we have committed against Thee either publicly or secretly, for the sin which we have committed against Thee by the evil cogitation of the heart...for the sin which we have committed against Thee by oppressing our neighbor...for the sin which we have committed against Thee by despising our parents and our teachers...for the sin which we have committed against Thee by the profanation of Thy Name...for the sin which we have committed against Thee with foolish expressions...for the sin which we have committed against Thee by denying and lying...for the sin which we have committed against Thee in traffic...in meat and in drink... in tale bearing...by faintness of heart...other sins are named and forgiveness of them is asked. Then these for which we are to bring a burnt offering, a sin offering, an offering according to our ability, a trespass offering, and for the sins which we have incurred the penalty of death by the Hand of God.” End of quotation.

It is to God, the Jewish person further says, “We are not so shameless of face or hardened to declare in thy presence, O Eternal, our God and The God of our ancestors, that we are righteous and have not sinned. Verily we confess we have sinned...we have trespassed...we have dealt treacherously...we have stolen...we have spoken slanderously...we have committed iniquity...and done wickedly...” End of quotation.

Then there is the plea, “O grant peace, happiness and blessing, grace favor and mercy unto us, and all thy people Israel...in the Book of Life, blessing, peace, and honest sustenance! May we and all thy people, the House of Israel, be remembered and written before thee to a happy life and peace. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who maketh peace.” End of quotation.

Yet is it not true, beloved Jewish friends, that you come away from the service in the synagogue or temple without certainty that your sins have been forgiven?? Does not your

conscience still condemn you?? Do you not wonder how the saying of some prayers...sometimes in Hebrew which you may not understand, sometimes in English while your mind is on other things...do you not wonder how it is possible that such a performance shall result in your being cleansed not only sufficiently to be written in the Book of Life, for another year, but also, and even more significantly, to merit a blessed life hereafter should you die?? Then you realize that you have not made restitution that you should have made...that you are still not on speaking terms with some friends, business associates, or even members of the family...sins that in the eyes of your Jewish Law, are condemnatory...deserving even death!! Does not your heart cry out within you: "Where am I really going? What am I doing here? Where do I come from? Does not your mind ask, "Is there no peace of mind, no rest for my soul, no sense of cleansing? No explanation of life and death? Where are love, joy, mercy? Where is God?? Do you not question the fact that you have confessed your sins for failing to make the offering, required under Torah, the Law, when it is no fault of ours that there is not a Holy Temple, that you might perform the sacrifice? Do you not say, "Is there not something wrong somewhere...something wrong with me...something wrong with God???"

Dear Jewish friend, there is nothing – ABSOLUTELY NOTHING WRONG WITH GOD!!! God knew that in the year seventy, the Holy Temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed, and that in this year that Jewish people would still be without the Holy Place of Sacrifice!! God said in His Holy Word, hundreds of years before the event that the sons of Israel, shall abide many days, without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice!! There are hundreds of prophecies literally fulfilled that show that God knows what has taken place, is occurring, and what shall develop!!

In that masterpiece of masterpieces, the Holy New Testament, written by Jewish men, but spoken to them by the One True and Living God, the God of Israel, the Omnipotent, Omnipresent, and Omniscient God, we are told, quote: Tenach, the First Covenant, had certain rules for the service of God...A tabernacle was erected..entered once a year only by the High Priest, alone bearing a sacrifice of shed blood to be offered for his own sins and those of the Jewish people...by these things The Holy Spirit, means us to understand that the way to the Holy of Holies, was not yet open...gifts and sacrifices are offered and yet are not capable of cleansing the soul, the conscience of the worshipper...the ceremonies were only intended to be valid until the time when Messiah, should establish the Truth...Now Messiah, has come among us, the High Priest, of the good things which were to come, and has passed through a greater and more perfect tabernacle which no human hand had made for it is no part of this world of ours...It was not without goats' or calves' blood...for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins...but with His own sinless blood that he entered once and for all in to the Holy of Holies, having won for us Eternal reconciliation with God...If the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a burnt heifer were, when sprinkled on the unholy, sufficient to make the body pure, then how much more will the blood of the Messiah, Himself, who in His Eternal Spirit offered Himself to God as the perfect sacrifice, purify your souls...your conscience...from the deeds of death to serve the Living God???"

Now, who is this Messiah?? Who is this perfect sacrifice?? He is the fulfillment of all of the prophecies of our Jewish Bible. He is the antitype, the real, of whom our Jewish Bible presents the type...He is none other than Jesus the Nazarene! Upon Him was laid the iniquity of every Jew, every Jew-tiler, and every Gentile when He shed His sinless life's blood and died voluntarily as our Eternal sacrifice, on a Roman Gibbet about two thousand years ago in Jerusalem!! It is He of whom Jewish people pray in the musaf prayer, quote: "Our sins and yoke of our transgressions HE bore!!" End of quotation. He was buried in a borrowed grave, but rose from it on the third day as Jesus the sin-bearer said that he would!! Then He was seen on at least twelve different occasions! Then eye-witnesses reported that they saw Him enter heaven, where He is now, seated at the right hand of God His Father! "So we are bringing to you joyful tidings of the promise which God made to our Jewish fathers because the risen Jesus is its fulfillment to us, their children! Be it known to you, brother-Jews, that through this man, Jesus, forgiveness of sins is announced to you! In Him every believer is absolved from everything from which you could not...you cannot be absolved by the Law of Moses.

Jesus, still says today, behold, I stand at the door and knock. He means the door of your heart! He continues with these words, "If any person hear my voice and open the door, I will come into him, and I will fellowship with him, and He will fellowship with Me"!

Beloved listener, if you have never opened the door of your heart that the only Living Savior-God, Jesus, might enter and become your own savior, through prayer with all of your heart please do so right now!! By doing so, you will know that your name is written down in God's Book of Eternal Life.! Amen!