

Elul and the Message of Repentance

This is a personal message to Derek, written to him by the Spirit of Father Yahuweh. I would like to share it with you today.

We were created in the same image as the Creator - to be faithful to ourselves – faithful to what is truly inside our heart. All that Yahuweh Elohim has ever wanted was for His children to be truthful about themselves. For how can we ever have a healthy relationship with Him and others, unless what we are on the outside matches who we are on the inside?

David writes in Tehillim (Psalm) 19, “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing before You, O Yahuweh, my rock and my redeemer.”

This last verse of the Psalm is probably one of my favorites. The word ‘pleasing’ is simply to find favor and beauty. In the ancient pictographic script, it means ‘precious as touching the skin of your grandchild’. David is crying out, “may my words and heart meditations bring beauty to your Face and be as precious as touching the skin of my grandchild, O Yahuweh, my rock and my redeemer.”

How beautiful is the ancient Semitic language, as it creates a permanent imprint in the mind; a real and long lasting impression.

David was a man after Yahuweh’s own heart because he knew what pleased Him. He knew that the words he spoke and what he meditated upon in his heart should bring beauty to Yahuweh. However, he also knew what did not please Yahuweh; outward expressions, words and actions that hide the hearts true meditations and motives.

Flattering a person with words while hiding how you really feel about them is mean and deceptive! We might get away with it for a while, but we will never get away with it with Abba Yahuweh. Think how that person would feel if they REALLY knew what you thought of them; probably cheap, used and just plain ugly. How we treat others is how we treat Yahuweh Elohim! Don’t say you love Him but hate your brother. Read the book of First Yochanan (John)...a real eye-opener!

When there is unity between what a person ponders in their heart and the words that flow forth from their mouth, one does not have to guess what is truly on a person’s heart. That is why Yahuweh said that He does not look on outward appearances but upon the heart; for the source of a person’s nature (their consistent behavior) resides in the heart.

Yahuweh is pleased with those who walk in humility because being humble is simply being truthful about ourselves through real actions that accurately reflect what the heart is speaking. True humility has zero interest in getting its own way.

It is choosing to forsake the *imbalanced scales* between that which we profess to be and who we really are on the inside. The discrepancy between the two can be corrected by being honest with who we really are. If the discrepancy is not corrected, we go on living a lie (a life out of balance). We may convince people into believing something we are not, but Yahuweh knows our true heart.

Yahuweh is NOT pleased with imbalanced scales (Mishle/Proverbs 20:23); in fact He hates it. He abhors it. Why? Because He hates deception, especially when we try to deceive others through dishonest intentions – as innocent as they may be at times. For how can Father have a relationship with His children if His children pretend to be something they are not? How can I trust anyone if I constantly doubt that the words they speak may or may not match with what their heart speaks? And we wonder why there are so many separations and divorces?

Being honest about ourselves is not a license to carry a self-defeating attitude. Anybody can be honest about themselves but do nothing to change themselves for the better. This is called self-centeredness (drawing attention back to ourselves). This is also called negative humility, (seemingly humble but merely an act to get our own way).

The sweet meditations of the heart that please Father are simply agreeing with what He has already spoken in His Truth about us, and realizing that being honest about ourselves is the abandonment of our own abilities to meet our own needs (pride). In short, His Truth overrides what we ‘think’ about ourselves; we just need to agree with that Truth. And once we agree with it, we give up trying to gratify our own needs because we finally recognize our inability to help ourselves. That is what pleases Him. He needs to be needed. Are we any different? Acknowledging our inabilities and His abilities keeps a proper balance and order in the Father child relationship. It’s healthy!

Ever wonder why people who say what they think, or speak their own mind seem to be healthier physically than those who bottle up their emotions? Read the dialogue Moses had with Yahuweh in Numbers 11. Moses never pretended with Him on how he felt, but let it all out. If the truth of the heart is never exposed to the light of day, a person will forever walk in darkness, pretending to be someone they are not. We were never created to be ‘actors’!

What we portray in appearances to others, must match who we are when we’re alone. It is impossible to have one foot on the broad path and one foot on the narrow path. A double-minded man is unstable in all His ways. King David understood this, which is why he walked within his own house in perfect innocence, regardless of who was around to see his ‘goodness’. He knew Yahuweh was always watching, so he aligned his behavior to what He thought and not what other people around him thought (Tehillim/Psalm 101).

Being real begins with real humility. People rarely act in public the same way they act at home. Pretending is exhausting; being real is vulnerable. Which one is

better to be? Fast forward to the time you will stand before the Judge and re-ask that question. Yahuweh has x-ray vision, so forget “putting” on appearances. With humility comes vulnerability; with vulnerability comes salvation and deliverance.

Messiah said in Mattithyahu (Matthew) 5:37, “But let your word ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’ be ‘No.’ And what goes beyond these is from the wicked one.”

Ya’aqob (James) said it this way, “But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by the heaven or by the earth or with any other oath. But let your Yes be Yes, and your No, No, lest you fall into judgment.” (Ya’aqob 5:12)

To answer the Judge with “maybe”, is to heap judgment upon ourselves. For He would rather have us hot or cold than to be indecisive regarding following His ways (Hazon/Revelation 3).

A vow demands a yes or a no. You either agree or you disagree. When the children of Israel said to Yahuweh through Moshe, concerning the covenant, “all that Yahuweh has spoken we shall do,” they were agreeing without even knowing the terms of the agreement yet. How much more now should we say “YES” because we do know the terms of the agreement?

It has been necessary to lay such a foundation as this in order to fully grasp the extreme importance of the season we have just entered; the season of Elul – the season of T’shuvah (repentance). Without repentance, there can be no selichah (forgiveness/pardon). Without forgiveness, there is nothing to prepare for – judgment has been sealed and there lies no hope for salvation.

What is repentance? Repentance is a 180 degree turning action of forsaking rebellion (turning away from sin) and an aggressive pursuit (turning towards) the Way, the Truth and the Life. According to the Hebrew, it is an act of “retiring to return.” The Greek meaning, in my opinion, fails to capture the very root of repentance, for it means simply ‘a change of mind’. When we are disgusted with something, do we not turn our heads away from the very thing that disgusts us? It is absolutely impossible to keep one eye on Truth and one eye on sin. The Creator gave us two eyes to focus; anything other than that is divided eyesight, blurry vision and a wealth of opportunities to stumble and fall.

Repentance does not mean ‘maybe’. Let your words and actions equal the intentions of your heart. When I learned to drive a car, I was taught that once I made a decision to go, I had better go. My actions to accelerate through the intersection matched my intention to go. To hesitate in my acceleration would be nothing more than an invitation to destruction. A ‘maybe’ in this case, would end my life. A ‘maybe’, in the case of repentance, will end your life – your eternal life.

To pretend (in actions and words) to be something your not (masking the true intentions of the heart) will eventually destroy any and all relationships you are in. True repentance says, “YES, I will follow my new Master” because the heart says, “YES, I will follow my new Master”. True repentance says, “NO, I will not follow my old master” because the heart says, “NO, I will not follow my old master”. True repentance never says, “YES, I will follow my new Master” when the heart is loudly proclaiming, “MAYBE, I’ll follow my new Master” or, “MAYBE, I’ll follow both masters.”

Joel 2 sets the stage for the ‘day of Yahuweh’. It is a last cry for repentance right before the Yom Teruah blowing of the Shofar (rams horn). Verses 12-14 state:

“Yet even now,” declares Yahuweh, “turn to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. “And tear your heart and not your garments, and turn back to Yahuweh your Elohim, for He shows favor and is compassionate, patient, and of great kindness, and He shall relent concerning the evil. Who knows – He might turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him, a grain offering and a drink offering for Yahuweh your Elohim?”

In His mercy, He cries out for His people to turn back to Him. The time of Elul is a privilege, a gift. Though this gift is being offered right now, the wise one will take advantage of returning to Him long before the train pulls out of the station. The Conductor has a schedule to keep; do not push his precious patience. In other words, don’t wait to get your act together – it may be too late!

The message of repentance carries with it two powerful attributes. It is a message of turning away (forsaking sin) and a message of turning towards Elohim in preparing for His coming. If there is nothing to prepare for, what ground does repentance have to stand on? What is the hope of eternal life, without the means to attain it? To stand righteously before the Judge, blameless in His sight, is not a one time confession of guilt, but a lifetime of daily submitting and interacting with the One who has the power to shield us from the wrath of His Father. No one knew this more than Yochanan (John) the Immerser.

Yochanan was sent to prepare the way of Yahuweh, and make His paths straight. Yochanan blasts the shofar in preparing the way of Messiah’s first coming. Psalm 89 is commonly read among the Orthodox Jews during the time leading up to the Day of Judgment, Yom Teruah, the Day of Gathering, the Feast of Trumpets, Tishre 1. I never knew why they read this Psalm during the time of Elul, the season of repentance, until it dawned on me – Tehillim (Psalm) 89 is about the covenant of Yahuweh made with David. However, it is much more than that. It is about Yahuweh keeping His Word to fulfill that covenant and promise.

The time of Elul is a time to remember that what Yahuweh has spoken WILL come true – both promises made to the righteous and the wicked alike. The

season of Elul is about preparing for fulfillment of the promise Yahuweh made to David, that his Seed, (Messiah Yahushua), will sit upon his throne forever – established forever as the sun and moon before Him. Tehillim (Psalm) 89 is the announcement of the coming of Messiah’s Kingdom and those that love and know the sound of the Shofar will be tuned into His coming. The blowing of the shofar is His battle cry shouting to His people, “WAKE UP! I’M COMING!”

Yochanan was not a weak man, but a man filled with the Spirit of Yahuweh from his mother’s womb. He may have very well been the rightful High Priest of his day, but because of the corruption of Rome, through their ‘installation’ of puppet Temple “clergy”, and the threat against the political and religious hierarchy by another coming ‘King’, it is highly probably, based upon scholarly and Orthodox views, that his parents took him to dwell in safety among the Essenes in the wilderness.

In the beginning of Mattithyahu (Matthew) 3, only the rightful High Priest could have spoken to the religious leaders of his day as Yochanan did so ‘eloquently’. The message of repentance was not a game to Yochanan, and he made sure that those who came to mock what he was doing were called out in front of all.

We are in the very serious time of Mattithyahu 3. The message of repentance precedes both Messiah’s first coming and second coming. The time of preparation is a small window. As Yochanan was not about to be in league with Rome, then, we had better not be in league with Rome, now. Taking a stand against the ‘offspring of vipers’ may cost you your head, however, do not fear the one who destroys the body only, but fear the One who has the ability to destroy both body and soul in the lake of fire. Do NOT speak out against the Roman vipers, unless you are willing to lose your life. Yochanan had the authority backing of Yahuweh to address Pharisaical attitudes, make sure you have that same backing should you need to speak out against the poisonous venom of the ancient spirits of Jezebel. Remember, Yahuweh cannot protect you against the ‘brood of vipers”, if the same viperous spirit of pride dwells within you.

To understand what Yochanan was dealing with, take a look at Mattithyahu (Matthew) 3:7-10:

“And seeing many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his immersion, he said to them, Brood of adders! Who has warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Bear, therefore, fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as father.’ For I say to you that Elohim is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And the axe is already laid to the root of the trees. Every tree, then, which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

Apparently, the same crowd Yochanan dealt with, Messiah dealt with later in Mattithyahu (Matthew) 12:33-37:

“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree rotten and its fruit rotten, for a tree is known by its fruit. Brood of adders! How are you able to speak what is good – being wicked? For the mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart. The good man brings forth what is good from the good treasures of his heart, and the wicked man brings forth what is wicked from the wicked treasure. And I say to you that for every idle word men speak, they shall give an account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you shall be declared righteous, and by your words you shall be declared unrighteous.”

Both Yochanan and the One whom he prepared the way for, Messiah Yahushua, dealt with the same group of people – the religion police. It is the same Pharisaical attitude we deal with today - religious hypocrites who are quick to call out the sins of others, while making excuses for their own. Do as I say, not as I do is the foundation of every religious system of man. For to be any other way, would mean there must be self-confrontation in order to change; taking ownership of one’s own faults in order to correct them. It’s the blame game of the Garden all over again; “the woman YOU gave me, gave me the fruit, and I ate.”

It’s easy to shift the blame off of yourself, because it buys a person time to decide which way will bring them the greatest reward. Pride refuses to accept any responsibility of its actions!

Humility demands to be in Yahuweh’s spotlight, for it has no interest in hiding anywhere but in the Light. Pride and arrogance are Luciferic traits, that glory in the spotlight of the world. However, to dwell in the spotlight of the world is to dwell in darkness. For the righteous, they long for Yahuweh’s spotlight, now, to expose any darkness, while the wicked, thinking they are able to escape His ever searching gaze, will be exposed by the Light of His wrath (and who can withstand Yahuweh’s wrath?)

What is hidden will be brought out into the light (Mark 4:22). For the wicked, the Sun of Righteousness will be as a burning furnace and the righteous will walk upon their ashes. While the same Sun of Righteousness will be a gentle warmth to the righteous (to those who fear His Name), basking in His healing rays (Malachi 4).

In the ancient eastern culture, an honorable person’s actions were never separated from their word. Separate the word from the action, and you have the definition of untrustworthy. Who wants to do business with a person like that? It is why Messiah came down on the Pharisees so hard in Mattithyahu (Matthew) 23 because he had to warn the people not to do what they (the Pharisees) did, but to obey what Moses (Moshe) said to do. Actions must immediately follow words which are born from what the heart meditates, desires and intends. Anything else is falsehood – an unbalanced scale.

“You brood of vipers!” What does that mean? What made Yochanan blast this phrase as he marched out of the river towards the river bank, when he saw the

Pharisees and Sadducees coming down towards the area of baptism (the mikvah site)? He immediately knew the fallacy of their religious hearts, because when he was isolated in the wilderness, separated unto Yahuweh, getting to know Father's heart, his understanding of Rome's deceptive and manipulative ways of using religion to control their political agenda's became increasingly clear. He knew the incredible dangers of the religious pride that had seeped into the hearts of Judea's "spiritual" leaders who "lord" over the people, leading the truly humble sheep away to follow the early beginnings of Roman anti-messiahs. This made Yochanan very angry.

Separating ourselves from the world, allows us to see more clearly who our real enemies are, and the methods they use to get what they want.

Yochanan righteously called out to them, "You offspring of your father the devil, you fruits of the serpent, you who slithery and syrupy roll sweetness off of your forked tongues, while your hidden agenda's and masked beguilement, laced with prideful manipulations of poison, are stored up in your fangs, awaiting the time to strike out at any who threatens your existence and position of authority; refusing to submit to your smooth words of deceit!"

After Yochanan's 'formal' address to the religious leaders, he asked them, "who warned you of the coming wrath?" What wrath is he talking about? When Messiah came the first time, He did not bring His Father's wrath, so it must be the wrath that Messiah will bring at His second coming. He knew no one warned them, so he immediately called their bluff. Who else at that time was preaching a baptism of repentance, warning people of the coming wrath?

As with the Pharisees, people mask the true intentions of their heart in order to somehow manipulate an undeserved reward for their actions. In the case of the Pharisees, the undeserved "reward" was recognition as "great men of God." They wanted to be acknowledged in public, they wanted the best seats of the house at dinner, they wanted CONTROL over the people and they used their "relationship with God" as their excuse to get what they wanted. Father Yahuweh has a different reward set aside for them, and Yochanan knew it. That is why he warmly welcomed them, "YOU BROOD OF VIPERS!"

According to the HELPS Word-Studies in Greek, the word viper or adder used by Yochanan is described below:

2191 *éxidna* – properly, a poisonous snake; (figuratively) incisive words that deliver *deadly venom*, with the use of blasphemy. This *switches* the bitter for the sweet, light for darkness, etc. 2191/*exidna* ("viper") then suggests the venomous desire to *reverse* what is *true* for what is *false*.

"For there is no stability in their mouth; Their inward part is destruction; Their throat is an open grave; They flatter with their tongue." (Tehillim/Psalm 5:9)

“Their throat is an open tomb, with their tongues they have deceived, the poison of adders is under their lips, whose mouth is filled with cursing and bitterness.”
(Romiyim/Romans 3:13,14)

The forked tongue of the Pharisees, clearly indicated the appearance of good with a heart of poison.

This is why Yahuweh demands our yes be yes and our no be no; anything else is blasphemy (calling good, evil and evil, good). See Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 5. For further in depth understanding of the poison of blasphemy, see the blog entry entitled, [“Spitting in the Face of the Creator – A close examination of the 3rd Commandment”](#)

“Who warned you of the coming wrath?”, Yochanan said. But then He goes one step further, and before any words could be uttered from the religious leaders mouths, Yochanan said, *“Bear, therefore, fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as father.’ For I say to you that Elohim is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.”*

The pompous attitudes of the Pharisees would never go down into the dirty waters of the Jordan, where the rest of the ‘sinners’ were, to ask forgiveness for their sins, because according to them, they were “children of Abraham.” Yochanan’s response? “Big deal!” It’s not your natural lineage that matters here, but the entrance into the lineage of the eternal Savior! The promises made to Abraham are inaccessible without the access code of repentance. To prepare to receive the inheritance given to Abraham without identifying with the sufferings of Messiah through repentance, is to prepare to receive everlasting damnation.

Do not think that this religious spirit is dead today, in fact it is very much alive. Have you not heard people say, ‘my daddy was a Baptist, my granddaddy was a Baptist, and I’ll go to my grave a Baptist?’ Or teenagers thinking they have a ‘get out of jail free card’ just because their father is a minister?

Dependence upon anything or anyone, other than true repentance to enter the Kingdom of Messiah, is like depending upon gravity to prevent you from falling on your face. Your family cannot save you! Your heritage and lineage cannot save you! Your church or synagogue cannot save you! Your religion cannot save you! Your best friend cannot save you! You cannot even save your own self! Only by a broken and contrite heart does anyone begin to have a chance at salvation. He only turns toward those who have turned towards Him with a bruised and poor spirit, trembling at His word (Yeshayahu/Isaiah 66:2).

As I sat the other morning reading through Mattithyahu (Matthew) 3, this one statement by Yochanan is what sparked the fire behind this message of repentance: *“Bear, therefore, fruits worthy of repentance...”* What was he trying to say to the Pharisees? What are fruits worthy of repentance?

I want to tie in from above something we have already discussed. According to the closing line of Tehillim (Psalm) 19, “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing...” The words of the mouth and the meditation of the heart must be equal, matching one another (whether hot or cold.) Anything else is considered a lukewarm attitude that speaks “good” on the surface, while the meditation of the heart is evil. This is the “root” of the Pharisaical attitude.

In addressing the religious leaders that day, Yochanan used the analogy of fruit bearing trees. A tree is only going to produce fruit that is consistent with its nature. Ya’aqob (James) says in chapter 3 verses 8-12:

“But no man is able to tame the tongue. It is unruly, evil, filled with deadly poison. With it we bless our Elohim and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of Elohim. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brothers, this should not be so. Does the fountain send forth the sweet and the bitter from the same opening? My brothers, is a fig tree able to bear olives, or a grapevine figs? So neither is a fountain able to make salt and sweet water.”

Once again, the words and actions must align to the intentions, the mediations of the heart, else they are deceitful actions, born from a heart of falsehood.

A tree may appear healthy with green leaves but not produce any fruit. Or, the fruit that is produced is defiled, withered and sickly. A tree that bears good fruit is consistent with the good root on which it is attached. If the root of your nature is not grounded in true repentance, the fruit you bear will be defiled, which is as good as being barren. Messiah speaking in Mattithyahu (Matthew) 12, said that either a tree bears good fruit or bad fruit.

Yochanan basically told the Pharisees to bear fruit consistent with your nature - do not hide, concealing your thoughts, for eventually what is inside will come out, hurting many people who bought into the ‘niceness’ of your words. Read Mattithyahu (Matthew) 12 and 23 for a better understanding.

“Bear fruits **worthy** of repentance” The word worthy in the Greek – is axios. It is the root of the English word “axis.” Worthy is the weight of ‘worth’, the value placed, the reward given, what is deserved. It is the assessed outcome based upon whatever is being measured on the scale. Without proper rotation of the earth’s axis, the earth would wobble out of balance. A scale must be balanced on its axis in order to assign a value to what is being measured. Without worth (the axis), the scale would be of no use, for no value could be determined.

How do our fruits (works, actions and deeds) daily ‘weigh in’ against the weight of the Truth of His Word? Are they found wanting or are they balanced with His Truth, meditated upon inside our hearts? Do our words and actions balance equally with the meditations of our heart? Are they found ‘valuable and deserving of a reward’ based upon Yahuweh’s scale and weights?

“Who says, ‘I have cleansed my heart, I am purged of my sin’? Differing weights and differing measures, both of them are an abomination to Yahuweh. Even a child is known by his deeds, whether his work is clear and right.”
(Mishle/Proverbs 20:9-11)

True repentance, in the nature of Messiah, never varies in weight, and will always balance out against His standard of measurement. True repentance will always be found worthy (valuable) in His sight. So, if the fruits we produce fail to balance (are found wanting) against the weight of Messiah’s nature, we have a choice. Either we examine our hearts and cry out to Him to align to His nature (balance the scale with brokenness of heart), or we ‘pretend’ the defiled fruit we are bearing is ‘good’ in order to conceal our lack of humility and willingness to align to His nature. This might fool the people around us, but the One who sees the heart will not be tricked by fruits of false ‘goodness’ that fail to balance in accordance with the weight of true repentance.

Sincerity of brokenness yields healthy and fruitful actions. If our fruit is unhealthy (found lacking), we need to add more to the weight of repentance, by ensuring it is rooted in humility and brokenness. Only then, can we produce fruits that coincide (balance) with the same level of repentance we have shown.

Remember, true repentance is a gift from Yahuweh; any other ‘remorse’ is simply being sorry we got caught. It’s easy to be sorry, when we know we do not have to correct our behavior. Dying to self is a grieving process and that process begins with true repentance. Death to our selfish ways will eventually correct our behavior. However, if we choose NOT to change and we ‘enjoy’ being who we are, outside of the standards of behavior set up by Messiah, we have already made the decision not to turn away from sin, because it would be too uncomfortable to live without it!

The nature of true repentance is the nature of Messiah. It has a weighted value assigned that is honest, fair and just. One cannot cheat Messiah, because His scales are always righteous. It was common in the ancient times, for merchants to cheat people based upon dishonest weights and scales. People that traded with these dishonest merchants lost fair values for the merchandise they were buying, selling or trading. I can only imagine if those scoundrel merchants were ever called out on their dishonest behavior, that a fight would most certainly break out. After all, no one is supposed to know the deviousness we hide under the cloak of ‘honesty’...right? It’s just business...right?

Here is the problem with the Pharisaical attitudes, ones full of pride, conceit, arrogance and haughtiness. It is this kind of attitude, like the deceptive merchants, that decide for themselves, what the weight, the standard of fairness should be; not what Messiah, THE standard of Truth says it should be. If our own standard (definition) of repentance does not match the standard of Messiah’s nature, then our works, our fruits will be equally yoked with a false standard, a false weight. Not only do we cheat others with a façade of “goodness”, but we

cheat ourselves out of the goodness of Messiah. If we do not align our standards of repentance with His, His judgment will align it for us.

The quality of the fruit we bear should equal the “weight and worth” of our repentance - to the measure of repentance is the same measure of fruit. We should produce the fruits of His nature - the fruits which are born on the Vine (Yochanan 15). The only good fruit is fruit born from a true heart of humility and repentance. A worker is worthy of his wages so must be the one who is repentant be worthy to receive the rewards of being truly repentant. (See Tehillim/Psalm 103 – many benefits, but only for those who fear His Name from a heart of repentance and humility)

I am most certain that Yochanan did not say what he said to the Pharisees with a wavering tone of voice; but one of conviction and power. Bearing fruits worthy of repentance is letting the evidence of your turning from sin, be in the quality of the fruit you bear.

The product (fruits) should be no less than what it costs to produce that product (true repentance).

In the case of repentance, the cost is death to self, turning from darkness to light in order that the fruit seen by others speaks of the value of what it took to produce that fruit (The value is the evidence of a life laid down for the Master, because of His life that was laid down for us.)

The value and worth of repentance is eternal life. Thus the fruit we bear must be of eternal value. Fruit that is not born of the eternal, will be burned up because it was never rooted in a nature that forsook all as Messiah forsook all to come to earth. Yochanan (John) 17:5, “And now, esteem Me with Yourself, Father, with the esteem which I had with You before the world was.”

Yochanan’s last recorded words to the Pharisees that day were, “And the axe is already laid to the root of the trees. Every tree, then, which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I indeed immerse you in water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to bear. He shall immerse you in the Set-apart Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He shall thoroughly cleanse His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the storehouse, but the chaff He shall burn with unquenchable fire.”

The closeness of the Kingdom of Messiah is so near, He is ready to cut down any tree that does not bear fruit in accordance with His nature; a nature born out of the root of true repentance. Defiled fruit is as good as a tree that is barren. It is of the same value. So let the value and worth of your repentance be evident in the fruit you bear. If we do not place ourselves under the crushing weight of His

discipline, we will never know how sweet of a wine He can produce within us.

He is the Vinedresser, He is the Master of the vineyard. Every vine, every tree, every root that does not produce good fruit, He will cut down. If our pride, unforgiveness, arrogance, lack of humility, is not allowed to be pruned by the Master, we will never grow to produce anything but dried up, withered fruit that is not worthy enough for even the pigs to eat.

Yahuweh the Father is preparing to have His Son, Messiah Yahushua change tools; from pruning shears to axe in hand. The window of repentance is narrowing – the season of Elul will eventually give way to Tishre 1. He only disciplines those He loves; prunes those who submit to His pruning shears. It is to those whom He tosses into the air, winnowing out the chaff that binds them, that will be gathered into His barn. If you do not feel His winnowing fork in your life, the cry better go forth; “Search me, O Yahuweh, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if an idolatrous way is in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

True repentance leads to a life that bears fruit that is consistent with that repentance. A lukewarm lifestyle is masking what is truly in our hearts for the sake of gaining and maintaining control over our own lives and the lives of others. Faking who we are for the sake of protecting our prominent positions in this life, will soon be shaken to the core, exposing who we really are.

The righteous (the hot ones) will take part in the first resurrection. The wicked (the cold ones) will only rise to be condemned to the lake of fire after Messiah's reign gives way to His Father. But what about the (lukewarm ones?) Where are they mentioned? Read Hazon (Revelation) 3 and find out they will be vomited out of the mouth of Messiah, literally meaning "to reject with extreme disgust". That doesn't sound like eternal bliss with the Master to me...does it you?

Messiah says, “I would rather you be hot or cold.” The time is coming very soon that the choice to be hot or cold will not be up to us, but to Him Who sits upon a throne established upon righteousness and justice. He alone is the Judge! Yahuweh has made it very clear in His Word, that with whatever measure, whatever standard we use to judge others, the same will be used to judge us. Because He has the ability to peer into the true intentions of the heart, He said, “Do not judge, lest you be judged.” How can we judge someone's actions when we do not know the motives behind those actions? Even if we think we know, He said, “Do not judge!” What we dole out to others, we will eventually reap. What is inside our hearts, will eventually come out and condemn us. Let your yes, be yes! Let your no, be no!

Tehillim (Psalm) 1 is a very clear picture of what happens when a person fails to meditate upon His Torah (His Word). His Word within our heart is our only defense against the leaven of the Pharisaical attitude. We will continue to bear good fruit as long as we are rooted deeply in His nature; planted by the streams of

Living Water. Tehillim (Psalm) 1 describes only two people groups; the righteous and the wicked. Hazon (Revelation) 22 describes only two people groups; the righteous and the wicked. Where does that leave the “in-between” people? He who is in-between let him become more wicked! Let him who rides the fence go ahead and jump on the side of the wicked, for evidently there is something about the wicked side of the fence that pleases you. What sin entices you to walk the balance beam of His mercy? Best to find out immediately! Be HOT or COLD, but never LUKEWARM! The wicked will not stand in the judgment. The lukewarm will be spewed out to the camp of the wicked. The righteous will dwell forever in the Light of His presence. I plead with you, return to your first Love! Time is short!

Over this season of Elul, read Tehillim (Psalm) 119. Are you comfortable reading it, or does it make you uncomfortable? You will know what I mean when you finish reading it. Pray Tehillim (Psalm) 51 and let Him crush any arrogance within you. Plead for a passion of Truth and a zeal to walk it out. If there is no zeal, no passion to follow the Master, established upon a foundation of true repentance, He will have no zeal or passion to save or deliver you from the wrath to come. Why should He? What is good for one is good for the other...right? It's about a relationship, not a fruitless religious system that leads straight to the pit of hell.

Stir up the fire of His presence within you. Fall in love with the spirit of Yochanan. Burn with a hatred for sin, making sure that burning flame begins with the spark of true repentance – turning toward the Author and Finisher of our faith.

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Yahushua, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the stake, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of Elohim.”

(Ib'rim/Hebrews 12:1,2)

Repent with sincerity - Prepare with zeal - Come, Yahushua, Come!

With a heart of brokenness for His people,

Shalom,

Derek

“May my words and heart meditations bring beauty to your Face and be as precious as touching the skin of my grandchild,
O Yahuweh, my rock and my redeemer.”

Appendix A

(Two excellent commentaries I picked out that cover Yochanan's address to the Pharisees and Sadducees – Matthew 3:8)

Matthew Poole's Commentary

"You come here and thrust yourselves into a crowd of penitents, but this is not enough, true repentance is not a barren thing; neither are your leaves of external profession a sufficient indication of it, you must bring forth the fruits of holiness, fruits that may answer the nature of true repentance. **The proper products of habits are called their fruits**; thus we read of the fruit of sin, and the fruit of righteousness. Fruits meet (answerable to amendment of life) for repentance are works that are the proper product of repentance, or justly answering an external profession of repentance. As faith, so repentance, without works is dead."

Meyer's NT Commentary

"Deduction from what precedes. In your impenitent condition you cannot escape from the wrath; proceed then to exhibit that morality of conduct which is appropriate to the change of mind as its result. Instead of your unrepentant condition, I require of you a practical repentance, the hindrance and opposition **to which arises from your overweening conceit as children of Abraham** (Matthew 3:9). What John here requires applied, indeed, to the people in general, but was especially appropriate to their scholastic leaders."