

**Congregation Beit Mashiach
Pastor Andrew Ketel
Rosh Hashanah Service
September 20, 2017**

Title: Comfort One Another.

Text: I Thessalonians 4:13-18

Once again, we stand on the threshold of a New Year which finds us as a world questioning our future and our safety. Hurricanes, earthquakes, ethnic cleansing, missile testing and threats of war are making the news headlines on a daily basis. It is a time of uncertainty and we have leaders in place that seem to feed that uncertainty. And yet we as believers know that these are just merely the birth pangs of the end of days (Matt. 24:6-8). In the midst of all this uncertainty we are called to gather tonight to celebrate an appointed feast day in which we acknowledge the King of Kings.

The central theme of Yom Teruah or Rosh Hashanah is the sovereignty of Adonai, His role as King. This theme finds its genesis around the creation story of humanity, which many people of faith believe was the ultimate climax of Adonai's work of creation. Humanity was created with the ability to choose, exercise free will. It was Adonai's desire to have a creature who would from his own free will accept Him as King. Because humanity can choose to deny Adonai, humanity's recognition of His sovereignty has value.

As I was studying this concept of Kingship and what it means I came across two words in Hebrew that do not seem so different, but yet carries a striking difference in meaning. The first word is מֶלֶךְ which means ruler – one who reigns against the wishes of his subjects, he is someone we would call a dictator or tyrant. The second word is מֶלֶךְ which means king, but the difference is that he rules with the consent and recognition of his subjects. Similar to the experience of King David of Israel when he took the throne, it was not by force, but with the consent of Adonai and the nation (I Samuel 5:1-3; II Samuel 23:1).

If we return to the creation story when humanity was formed from the earth and placed in the Garden of Eden it was with purpose. This purpose went beyond the mere act of acceptance of the Kingship of Adonai, it followed that with the acceptance of His Kingship there also would be an acceptance of His purpose. From the first chapter of Genesis we are told that humanity would be given the right/privilege to rule and reign over the rest of creation (Gen. 1:26-28). In essence, they would mirror the characteristics and authority of their Creator. Even this had the underlying purpose to establish the Kingdom of our God, rather than the kingdom of self. The mere act of disobedience in the Garden of Eden allowed sin to obstruct this goal on several levels. First, humanity never did walk in all that Adonai had purposed, their domination of creation was not to establish His kingdom, but rather to advance humanities greed and lusts. Secondly sin destroyed the image borne by humanity, no longer were we reflecting the characteristics and nature of our Creator. Thirdly, sin broke the bond of fellowship between Creator and creature, there was a lose of intimacy and communion between both God and our fellow man. One thing we must keep in mind that these objectives were not merely hopeful wishes or desires, they were stated in the bond of covenant. Yes, a covenant made with humanity on the part of Adonai. As the Prophet Isaiah (Is. 55:11) writes that, "... *the Word of Adonai will not return to Him empty ...* "

Since it was spoken, then we have the assurance that this covenant will be realized in its fullness before the end of the age.

Every year as we honour the traditions of this season they may seem trifle to some. Searching our hearts for unforgiveness, offence, roots of bitterness, pride and sinfulness have a greater purpose than merely taking stock. With each step towards reconciliation we establish the presence of the Kingdom of Adonai amongst us. It is more than merely setting your accounts in order, so that if you pass away then heaven is your destiny. It is about preparing our hearts to submit to the King of the Universe. To become all that He has destined us to become, reflecting His very nature and character in all that we say and do, and to once again heal the rift in our relationship between Adonai and our fellowman establishing a Godly sense of fellowship and communion based and built firmly upon our Lord's purpose and plans. This is what is involved when we declare the Adonai is our King, it means that we have come on board with His program (*Shema-ing*). These are not merely words, they are thoughts that have been transformed into action.

Sometimes when we consider our society, where the leading scholars mock God and the Scriptures, where immorality becomes the norm and where self has established itself firmly on the throne of our society's heart then it is easy to become overwhelmed and discouraged. But the Scriptures give us words of encouragement that this covenantal goal will be realized (II Tim. 2:11-13).

Every time that we bring reconciliation to our relationships it is also another step towards advancing the Kingdom of God and the realization of ruling and reigning in a manner that reflects the heart of the Father. This is something that we all need to understand and be willing to pay the price. The Kingdom can and will be established here on earth, no matter how dark things may appear. We need to grasp that each step forward is a step closer to its reality. And the Apostle Paul tells us of the rapture to come is to be an encouragement to each believer, not because we escape the horrors of the tribulation period, but because it is the portal through which we must go to step into the reality of Genesis 1:26-28 (Rev. 5:9, 10; 20:4, 6; 22:5).

The promise of the rapture is extended to those who faithfully accepted the Kingship of Adonai, by walking in His ways, reflecting His nature and Character and giving themselves totality to His purposes and plan. As the Apostle wrote to Timothy, "*If we endure, we will also reign with Him.*" May these ten '*Days of Awe*' be a time when we reaffirm the Kingship of Adonai as we listen to the sound of the Shofar and fully submit afresh to His ways and purposes. Do not allow pride and weariness to hinder the advance of His Kingdom this season, allow the promises of Adonai to be what encourages and motives you to endure. **Lashanah Tovah!**