

Elul 2021

1. Feasts Are Approaching

When August arrives, the month of Elul arrives on the Biblical Calendar and that means the Fall Feasts are approaching.

Elul is all about romance. It arrives just two weeks after the marriage holiday Tu B'Av.

Song of Songs 3:4, "...I [have] found the one my soul loves..."

Song of Songs 5:2a, "I was sleeping, but my heart was awake..."

The Four Hebrew Letters that Spell Elul [alef, lamed, vov, lamed]

Are an acronym for the phrase in Song of Songs:

"ANI L'DODI V'DODI LI," translates, "**I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine.**" (6:3)

ל	ו	ד	א
lamed	vov	lamed	alef
LI	V'DODI	L'DODI	ANI
is mine	and my beloved	my beloved's	I am
"I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine." Song of Solomon 6:3			

Since Song of Songs is both **the story of two people in love** and a **beautiful allegory of our Bridegroom Jesus and us, the Bride of Christ**, it has a double meaning.

The aleph or **the "I am"** can refer to the beloved as being God, or it can refer the person you love. Lots of couples get this verse as a tattoo or on jewelry (**I have it on my wedding ring**).

Whenever we draw close to God with a humble heart seeking to follow, we are saying, "**I am my beloved's**". God's response, as He pours out mercy and forgiveness, is always, "**And my beloved is mine**".

Elul is considered, "Thirty days to prepare the soul, search the heart of God, and awaken the heart." An Elul type of love goes beyond "I am my beloveds" to "My beloved is mine", which is to ask from a more mature place, "How am I doing at loving God and loving this person – How can I grow, do better, be closer?"

God gave us the Biblical Calendar with its Feasts, Fasts, and Holy Days and is asking us to remember, and also to set these days apart. These days **reveal His heart, in hopes that we will come to find the romance of God too difficult to resist.**

Elul is the beginning of a 40-day period of Preparations and Repentance. Moses ascended Mount Sinai for the third 40-day period in a row.

The first time Moses ascended was to receive the first tablets; 40 days later - on the 17th of Tammuz, Moses descended to find Israel sinning with the golden calf and **he smashed the tablets.**

So, Moses returned for a second 40-day period to ask for forgiveness for the Israelites.

Moses would prove to be a trend setter. On Elul Day 1: Jonah left for 40 days to tell Nineveh to

repent; Moses ascended Sinai for the third time and would receive the second set of tablets; Yeshua (Jesus) went into the wilderness for 40 days. **After 30 days of Elul**, the Month of Tishrei begins with Rosh Hashanah, which is the 6th day of creation when God created man. **Moses, Jonah, and Jesus all returned from their 40 day journeys on the 10th day of the month of Tishrei – the holiest day on the Jewish calendar - Yom Kippur.**

These activities all occurred **during the Final Week of Elul**. All the activity was just preparation. **As the 6th day began, God created all the land animals and most importantly, mankind on Rosh Hashanah.**

Most nations use the Gregorian Calendar (day to day) so Tishrei doesn't signal a New Year, just the Fall Season.

What's rather amazing about the Biblical Calendar is that it has two distinctly different New Year's Days that take place six months apart. Why?

The oldest calendar, called the **Civil Calendar** is 5,781 years old and literally began at creation during the Fall Season and this calendar is still used to count years and time.

The other calendar is called the **Religious Calendar** and it began at Passover (3,500 years ago), creation when we were redeemed from slavery in Egypt, and when Yeshua (Jesus) was crucified at Calvary on Passover to enable us to be born again.

The Gregorian, which is determined by the movement of the sun, is quite different than **the Biblical, which changes with the moon, which marks the dates of feasts, festivals, fasts, or holy days** to encounter God in repentance, or to thank Him for the harvest and His blessings.

These two calendars are much like two parts of a poem, or a reverse mirror image of each other that are separate but also connected to each other. They don't just move in a cycle one after another to make a full year. Instead, they transition slowly during their final month with a period of introspection and some fasting. In the winter this happens with a Fast (called Purim), and here at the end of summer it happens with two separate events, a 21-day Fast (called The Three Weeks), and the month of Elul, which is all about preparing your heart.

2. The King Is In The Field

Spiritual birthday today 42 years ago

This forty-day period that begins on Elul 1st includes the beautiful imagery of "The King is in the field". Which is to say, God has drawn near to look closely at how you are tending the fields - the specific blessings and responsibilities that He has given you.

Elul is when you are preparing to meet God for judgment - But He comes to the field to be the most approachable so we can truly know Him in His mercy. It's a type or shadow of Yeshua (Jesus) coming to earth to walk among us, and even a more beautiful shadow of the 30 days He walked the earth following His resurrection. The resurrected King was in the field.

We in turn are to show mercy and forgiveness to others. “**Teshuvah**” or “turning back around to face Him” is shown not only by repentance, but also by intentionally finding ways to do good to others.

During Elul, Torah Study and Prayer are the Focus because they are both associated with the verse, “**Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth - for your love is more delightful than wine.**” (Song of Songs 1:2) which alludes to God’s words being in one’s mouth.

Sabbaths - Holy times are compared to a Lookout Tower, where we rise high above our labor to see the purpose of the work from a higher perspective.

This is a time to be nurtured, to allow Him to fix what has been broken and to nurture us back into a place of health and prosperity.

There are some things that have been recorded in our life's history that are now incorrect because God has come and dealt with them.

There are accusations and condemnations that need to be removed, and mistakes that need to be reconciled.

God wants to rewrite our story and change the way we see it.

Isaiah 55:6-7 “**Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.**”

Psalms 139:23-24: “**Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if any wicked way is in me; and lead me in the way everlasting.**”

Yehovah established the Feasts and Fasts so that we can encounter Him in a practical way so we can discover His delight for us; to teach us how to be in Yehovah’s presence both now and for eternity. Since the Israelites first arrived at Mount Sinai as rescued slaves from Egypt, to meet with Yehovah at the first Pentecost 3,500 years ago, and decided He was too scary to be that close to, God has been continually trying to show them that He is for them and doesn’t desire to destroy them, but to marry them.

Since being with God in heaven is real (as shown by Rosh Hashanah), we need to live like it and prepare for it. Since a final judgment will happen one day for every person (as shown by Yom Kippur), we need to live like it and prepare for it. And since we will reign with Yeshua (Jesus) for eternity on the New Earth (as shown by Sukkot [The Feast of Tabernacles]), we need to live like it and prepare for it.

3. Parable

The idea of “The King is in the Field”, is a bit of a parable. Our King is coming to visit His home away from home (earth) to meet with us as well and examine us; and we will have a chance to greet Him and encounter His presence as Emmanuel (God with us) again.

Now technically, since Yeshua (Jesus) lives in us, He is always near. Scripture tells us that if we will seek Him we will find Him. In this case, He is seeking us. We have not even begun to experience His presence yet, so this encounter is something that is His idea. He’s not just coming to sit around with us. He’s coming to prepare us to labor better.

If we think of the palace that He left as the upcoming feasts of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Meaning He has gone to prepare an eternal place for us, so He is taking time away from that labor to make sure we are on track to go there and are inviting those still trapped in the world around us.

It's so easy for us to become preoccupied with our work, friends, family, life, dreams, goals, etc. Which means it's easy to miss the King when He visits and even easier to miss Him while He is dwelling within us. Will you recognize Him? Can you recognize Him?

Every now and then, one of TV's latenight hosts will bring a huge musical star into the busy New York City subway to perform in a disguise. And thousands of people will pass by barely noticing them. Some pause and look and think to themselves, "Wow, that's a great cover band," but then they go on their way not realizing that they could have enjoyed a concert that would cost them \$100 a ticket for free.

Several years back, the violin virtuoso Joshua Bell came to the Washington D.C. subway station alone on a dare and played his 3.5 million dollar Stradivarius on a cold January morning. Right on cue, over a thousand people walked right by. What was interesting was who stopped: a few adults and every single kid. Until the kids were pulled away by their parents. Acoustics in a subway station are amazing and the sound of any violin will make you stop and draw you in, but this was the best violin and the best player putting on a free concert to anyone willing to listen.

During the month of Elul, our Savior will be drawing near in a million different ways, and encountering us each in His and our unique ways. The question is, will we hear the sound of His voice in our subway station, or our office, our car, our home, or even our church. Will we be like the Shunamite bride in Song of Solomon 3:4 and 5:2? "...I have found the one my soul loves...I was sleeping, but my heart was awake..."

Psalms 24:3-7, "Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god. They will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God their Savior. Such is the generation of those who seek Him, who seek your face, God of Jacob. Lift up your heads, you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in."

4. Beginning With Mercy

Elul is the Sixth Month of the calendar that begins in Spring with Passover & the Twelfth Month of the calendar that begins in Fall with Rosh Hashanah.

Elul connects the past year with the coming year – so we reflect on where we are, how we got here, where we are going, and if it's where we should be going.

It is called "the month of repentance," "the month of mercy" and "the month of forgiveness."

Since God heard the prayer of Moses to forgive the people, Elul is set apart as a time to remember when God revealed His great mercy. We in turn honor God when we repent and show mercy and forgiveness to others. "Teshuvah" or "turning back around to face Him" is shown not only by repentance, but also by intentionally finding ways to do good to others. It's called "teshuvah" - it includes repentance and doing good to others.

Beginnings

Long before Moses, Elul was all about beginnings. The last week of Elul was when God discussed creating man in His own image and then spoke the universe into being with His first words on the 25th day of Elul. The last week of Elul includes the first five days of creation.

It's important to recognize here that though **Rosh Hashanah**, which literally means **the Head or Beginning of the year**, isn't the actual beginning, because the month of Elul was an intricate part of the foundation.

As the 6th day began, it was the first day of the month of Tishrei, when God created all the land animals and most importantly, mankind. Which means, **literally and technically, the 25th of Elul is the 1st day of creation (Rosh Hashanah is the 6th Day when man was created).**

At creation we find Him hovering over the waters **speaking light into being** and separating it from the darkness. Then making a separation for the waters above and the waters below, making the land and seas and causing seed bearing plants and trees to grow. He made the sun, moon, and stars, and created sea creatures and birds.

The month of Elul connects the past year with the coming year and so it is a time to reflect on where we are, where we are headed, and where we should be going. **It is customary to blow the shofar every morning** (except on Shabbat) **to announce the coming of the month of Tishrei and the New Year.** The blasts are meant to awaken one's spirit from the slumber of sin and inspire him to begin the soul searching which will prepare him for the High Holy Days of Rosh Hashannah, the Days of Awe and Yom Kippur.

It is also customary to recite the 14 verses of Psalm 27 every day till the end of Sukkot.

Psalm 27

- 1 "Yehovah is my light and my salvation - whom shall I fear? Yehovah is the stronghold of my life - of whom shall I be afraid?
- 2 When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall.
- 3 Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident.
- 4 One thing I ask from Yehovah, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of Yehovah all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of Yehovah and to seek Him in his temple.
- 5 For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock.
- 6 Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to Yehovah.
- 7 Hear my voice when I call, Yehovah; be merciful to me and answer me.
- 8 My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, Yehovah, I will seek.
- 9 Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, God my Savior.
- 10 Though my father and mother forsake me, Yehovah will receive me.
- 11 Teach me your way, Yehovah; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors.
- 12 Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, spouting malicious accusations.

13 I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of Yehovah in the land of the living.

14 Wait for Yehovah; be strong and take heart and wait for Yehovah.”

5. Shmitta

Each Hebrew year has two starting dates. In the spring, the month of Nisan, which determines the dates of all the upcoming holidays.

It is also the date by which the reigns of the kings of Israel were reckoned.

In the fall, the month of Tishrei kicks off the second calendar and New Year for the civil calendar which determines the Shmitta (the sabbath for the land every 7 years) and Yovel (the Jubilee every 50 years).

During shmita, the land is left to lie fallow and all agricultural activity, including plowing, planting, pruning and harvesting, is forbidden. Any fruits or herbs which grow of their own accord and where no watch is kept over them are deemed (ownerless) and may be picked by anyone.

Leviticus 25 promises bountiful harvests to those who observe the shmita; observing it is a real test of faith.

The next Shmita year is 2021-2022 (5782).

The rabbis of the Talmud and later times interpreted the Shmita laws in various ways to ease the burden they created for farmers and the agricultural industry.

The heter mechira (leniency of sale), developed for the Shmita year of 1888–1889, permitted Jewish farmers to sell their land to non-Jews so that they could continue to work the land as usual during Shmita.

This temporary solution to the impoverishment of the Jewish settlement in those days was later adopted by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel as a permanent edict,

Why were the Jews exiled?

They had been in the Promised Land for roughly 800 years, and for 490 years, they disobeyed his Sabbath rest for the land. The Jews were allowed to work the land for six years, but **on the seventh year they had to let the land get a rest. God commanded this because the land needs to recuperate, gaining back its minerals.** Also, not farming for an entire year was an act of trust and obedience to God.

Leviticus 24 and 26 promises for those who disobey, ‘You, however, I will scatter among the nations and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate, and your cities become waste. 34‘Then the land will enjoy its sabbaths all the days of the desolation, while you are in your enemies’ land; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths.’

(Jeremiah 25 and 29) “This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 12‘Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,’ declares the LORD, ‘for their iniquity, and the land of the

Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation... “For thus says the LORD, ‘When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place. 11‘For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. 12‘Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13‘You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. 14‘I will be found by you,’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.’”

Ezra records that God moved King Cyrus to let the people back into the land. This was truly a supernatural event. Cyrus even returned the gold and silver that Nebuchadnezzar had sacked from the Temple in 600 B.C. (Dan. 1).

The length of the exile was set because of their disobedience to the Sabbath, but this wasn't the primary reason for the exile. The Jews committed idolatry, child sacrifice, and ritual prostitution. This was the reason God removed them from the land.

6. Who May Ascend?

Acts 3:19 “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.”

Repent – sins are removed – times of refreshing come. We want to get our way and be refreshed by people or things. If we turn to God, He will remove the things that are hindering us from being refreshed. He is our Bridegroom – when we submit to Him everything changes.

Teshuvah - often translated as repentance but it's much bigger than that. Shuv means to return or to turn back (to God and from evil). Since God is the means by which we turn from evil, shuv is more about turning back to God with all of your heart, soul, and strength to change your direction or destiny.

- 1 Forsake The Sin (agree with the Truth or saying the same thing);
- 2 Regret The Break in your relationship with God;
- 3 Confess The Truth and make amends;
- 4 Accept Forgiveness;

We all make choices, some good and some bad, but we can't choose the consequences of our choices. Those are inherent in the choices. We are all becoming something and someone beyond ourselves. No one is shocked when they harvest tomatoes unless they planted something else. Still, we all hope to escape the fruit of our worst decisions.

Scriptures & Prophetic Aspects

Psalm 24:3-7, “Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god. They will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God their Savior. Such is the generation of those who seek Him, who seek your face, God of Jacob. Lift up your heads, you gates; be lifted up,

you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.”

Isaiah 1:16-17, “Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.”

Lamentations 5:21, “Restore us to yourself, O Lord, that we may be restored! Renew our days as of old.”

One of the more significant areas we need to address in our souls is our expectations. When we or those we love go through suffering, great loss, or difficulties that go beyond what our belief system can handle, we can lose our bearings and even our faith.

1 Peter 5:8-10, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.”

The Jewish leaders of His time rejected Yeshua (Jesus) when He first came. He didn't meet their expectations. They were expecting a Messiah who would bring relief from the Romans and restore the Kingdom of David. This, despite the numerous passages in the Tenach (OT) which describe Messiah both as a suffering servant, and as coming on the clouds of heaven. Some concluded that there must be two Messiahs – Mashiach ben Yosef – the Suffering Servant, and Mashiach ben David – the conquering king, bringing judgment to the wicked, restoring the Temple and the Kingdom to Israel. The truth was of course that there was and is just one Messiah, who will come twice.

When Yeshua (Jesus) failed to even try to restore the Kingdom of David, he was dismissed as a false Messiah. Likewise, it's possible for our expectations to be wrong or even contaminated by our own sin? If we expect only victory but fail to understand the suffering that we are called to, we can reject the work of our Messiah in us. It's a narrow path with real dangers and real enemies that He leads us on. Elul is the perfect time to check what our expectations are they based upon? Selfish or carnal motives or the purifying fires of suffering. True fellowship with Him leads to the greatest joy.

7. The Aleph Tav

Elul was when God first determined to create man. To do this He first creates a world for them to live in and causes Himself to be slain for them. At creation, He is **speaking light into being** and separating it from the darkness. Then He separates the waters above and the waters below, making the land and seas and causing seed bearing plants and trees to grow. He made the sun, moon, and stars, and created sea creatures and birds. **These activities all occurred during the final week of the summer month Elul.**

When He **spoke the universe into being** His first words on the 25th day of Elul are, “**In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.**”

In Hebrew, “**Bereshit bara** [buh-raw] **Elohim et** [silent] **ha-sha-ma-yim ve'et ha'aretz** [ha-ah-retz].”

הָאָרֶץ	וְאֵת	הַשָּׁמַיִם	אֵת	אֱלֹהִים	בָּרָא	בְּרֵאשִׁית
ha'aretz	v'et	ha'shamayim	et	Elohim	bara	Bereshith
the earth	and	the heavens	-	God	created	In the beginning

In the chart above, reading right to left - you will **notice two Hebrew letters together as a stand-alone word** after the name of God (Elohim). These are the first and the last letters of their alphabet **Aleph and Tav**. In Hebrew, it's transliterated as "et"; **there is no English translation.**



Aleph Tav is one of the most common words found in the Hebrew scripture. Why is it here in His first breath? At the beginning of creation, before God could establish anything, He needed to create language, specifically the 22 Hebrew letters/numbers from Aleph to Tav that He would use to speak everything into existence.

The Aleph Tav "combined as a word", occurs around 7,000 times in the Tanakh (Old Testament), most often as part of covenant events where God is directly involved. **Aleph Tav is silent, meaning it's not spoken.** It's often used in a grammatical way to point to the object of a sentence.

The Aleph denotes the first position in all things. *Aleph* is depicted as an ox head. The ox head became the symbol of leadership.

The three letters in *Aleph* (Aleph-lamed-phe) are pictured as the oxhead, the shepherd's staff, and the mouth or voice. Which means: **the voice of the chief shepherd (or divine shepherd).** Remember that each letter is also a number. The *Aleph* includes **yod-yod-vav**, **yod** is the number 10 and **vav** is the number 6, so Aleph equals 26. What other word equals 26? Yahweh/Jehovah.

But mostly it's used with the name of God (Yehovah), to indicate the presence of God, specifically intended to reveal the Messiah.

In Bereshit, the letter Bet is enlarged, and **since it means house**, this letter is considered to mean the House of God.



The **Aleph** is made up of 3 parts. A **yod** above (the heavens) and a **yod** below (the earth). So, they are divided - Yet connected by the mediator **vav** which is called ben Elohiym (Son of God) and: **vav** means **nail**.

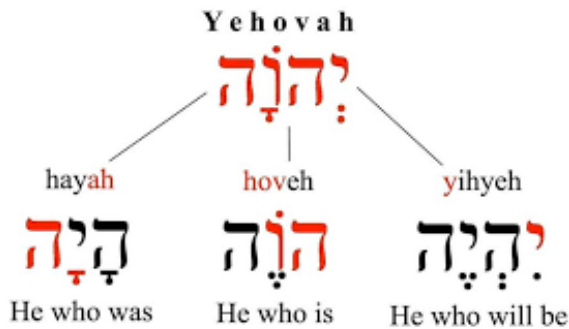
So, the letter Aleph is: The **yod** - The right hand of God.
The other **yod** (The left hand of God) and the **vav** (The Messiah).

The hands of God on the earth and in the heavens is **connected by the vav, which means the nail.**

When Jesus spoke to the Apostle John on Patmos in Revelation 1:8 (and also in 22:13), the Greek reads, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, says the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."



But if you read the manuscript of Revelation in Hebrew that's in the British Library, or the Passion Translation which is taken from the Hebrew and Aramaic, it reads,



"[Ani h'Aleph v'tav] I am the Aleph and the Tav, the beginning and the ending," says [Yehovah Elohim] the Lord God, [Ha'hava] who is, [Ha'hayah] who was, and [Ha'yihyeh] who is to come, the [Shaddai] the Almighty."

Hayah, Hoveh, and Yih'yeh combine to form the four letters of the tetragrammaton into the name of Yehovah.

Interestingly, Rabbis call Genesis 1:1 "the first Menorah". Each word is a candle and aleph-tav is the candle in the middle which is called the helper which you use to light the others. Which brings us back to Revelation 1, "I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest."

In Genesis, when we are introduced to Jacob and Esau, the Aleph-Tav are in front of each of their names. But after Esau sells his birthright and blessing to Jacob, the name of Esau is used another 78 times but the Aleph-Tav are never there again, because his birthright and covenant are gone.

The presence of the Aleph-Tav is the same with Ruth. The first 10 times her name is used, there is no Aleph-Tav. But when Boaz redeems her, the Aleph-Tav is added in front of her name.

When we take communion, we are literally taking His name as ours, and putting our hope in the strength of His covenant – like a Jewish couple at their wedding sharing a cup of wine and then smashing the cup so no one else can ever enter that covenant. When you drink the wine of communion you are saying "I do" to His proposal. And He is adding the aleph-tav to your name.

8. The Tav

The **Tav** in Paleo Hebrew was a mark that amounts to the crossing of two sticks to form a T or a cross. The **Tav** is considered the mark of salvation or protection by God.

Ezekiel 9:4 "and the Lord said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a **mark Tav** (תו) on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it."

All those who were found in **without this mark** of salvation or protection **were slain**. **This is the same word as the mark that God put on Cain** to protect him after he killed his brother Abel.

Tav

Early Hebrew	Middle Hebrew	Late Hebrew	Modern Hebrew

Ancient Name: Tav
 Pictograph: Crossed Sticks
 Meanings: Mark, Sign, Signal, Monument
 Sound: T

The tav can represent ticheyeh, which means “life.” But it can also represent the word tamus, which means “death.” The Aleph-Tav is one of the most important concepts in the Hebrew scriptures. It’s always near the name of God, and it means “the Strength of the Covenant.” It’s in Zechariah 12:10 “and they shall look upon me ALEPH-TAV whom they have pierced...”

In Ezekiel 8: On the fifth day of the sixth month [Elul] of the sixth year [they had been in exile for 6 years of the 70], (Yehovah spoke this word to Ezekiel on this day is history in 428 B.C. (2,449 years ago) as he was sitting among the captives in Babylon) as I was sitting in my house, and the leaders of Y’hudah were sitting there with me, the hand of the Lord Yehovah fell on me. 2 I looked and saw what seemed like a man made of fire. From what appeared to be his waist downward was fire, and from his waist upward was what appeared to be a gleaming amber-colored brilliance. 3 The form of a hand was put out, which took me by a lock of my hair; and a spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and brought me, in these visions from God, to Yerushalayim, to the entrance of the inner [courtyard] gate that faces north. There stood the idol that [arouses God’s] jealousy and provokes [his] zealous indignation.

Idolatry had been growing more general and more bold from the time of Solomon. He built places of worship for the various idols of his wives "in the hill that is before Jerusalem"; but King Ahaz and Manasseh both put an idolatrous altar in the temple itself, removing the brazen altar to make room. All the subsequent kings of Judah, except Josiah, were wicked men, and made use of the temple for idolatrous worship, and Ezekiel in his vision is now seeing those idols standing in the court.

God takes him to the various gates and courtyards where there were idols, and God asked him, “Do you see what they are doing, the horribly disgusting practices that the house of Isra’el is committing here, **so that I must distance myself from my own sanctuary?**

Then Yehovah took him to the Courtyard where the priests were all worshipping carved images and burning incense to them in the dark, “**because they say, ‘Yehovah can’t see us; Yehovah has left the land.’?**” And then God took him between the porch and altar they were worshipping the Sun. He asked me, “...Have you seen this? Does the house of Y’hudah consider it a casual matter that they commit the disgusting practices they are committing here...**Therefore I will act in fury, my eye will not spare, I will have no pity. Even if they cry loudly right in my ears, I will not listen to them.**”

In Ezekiel 9 Yehovah sends angels out to: “Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and **put a mark Tav (ת) on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.**”

And to other angels He said to, “**Go through the city after him and strike! Don’t let your eye spare; have no pity! 6 Kill old men, young men, girls, little children, women — slaughter them all!**”

In Ezekiel 10 God removes the fire from His altar and then removed His glory from the temple. **Now the glory of Yehovah left the threshold of the house and halted above (the cherubim in the KJV) the k’ruvim [care-oo] or guardians. 19 The k’ruvim lifted their wings and rose off the earth — I was watching as they went off with the wheels next to them. They paused at the entrance to the east gate of Yehovah’s house, with the glory of the God of Isra’el over them, from above.**

In Ezekiel 11 God prophesied destruction through Ezekiel. At the door of the gate I saw twenty-five men; and in the midst of them **Ya’azanyah the son of Azur, and P’latyahu [pe-lat-yah-hu] the son of B’nayahu, princes of the people.**

The names are significant:

Jaazaniah = **Yehovah hears**, son of Azur = **the helper**;

Pelatiah = **God rescues**, son of Benaiah = **Yehovah builds**.

He says their names to show the false hopes with which the people deceived themselves;

While Ezekiel was **prophesying, P'latyahu (God rescues) falls over dead, so God is saying I will not be rescuing you from this destruction**. The princes were misleading the people to their destruction.

When P'latyahu dies it causes Ezekiel to cry out, and God then ends the prophecy with a powerful promise:

16 Therefore, say that the Lord Yehovah says this: 'True, I removed them far away among the nations and scattered them among the countries; nevertheless, **I have been a little sanctuary for them in the countries to which they have gone.**' ["little sanctuary" meaning instead of the destroyed temple, God would raise up Synagogues for them.] Therefore, say that the Lord Yehovah says this: "**I will gather you from the peoples and collect you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give the land of Isra'el to you.**" 18 Then they will go there and remove all its loathsome things and disgusting practices, 19 and **I will give them unity of heart. "I will put a new spirit among you."** I will remove from their bodies the hearts of stone and give them hearts of flesh [easily submissive]; **20 so that they will live by my regulations, obey my rulings and act by them. Then they will be my people, and I will be their God.**

21 But as for those whose hearts go after the heart of their loathsome things and disgusting practices, **I will bring [the consequences of] their ways on their own heads,' says the Lord Yehovah."**

Today, 2449 years ago Ezekiel had that vision as a captive in Babylon, and God carried out that vision less than 5 years later.