

— A SEASON OF *Teshuvah* —

40 DAYS

— RETURN TO ME —

REPENT. RETURN. ROOT.



JOEL 2:12-13



Why 40 Days?

The number “forty” + (time period) is mentioned at least 146 times in Scripture. The phrase “40 days and 40 nights” appears 24 times.

It symbolizes trials or the fulfillment of promises.

It’s a number associated with testing and the hardships one must endure to become more spiritually aware.

<http://www.biblestudy.org/bibleref/meaning-of-numbers-in-bible/40.html> <https://guideposts.org/angels-and-miracles/miracles/gods-grace/the-number-40-in-the-bible/>



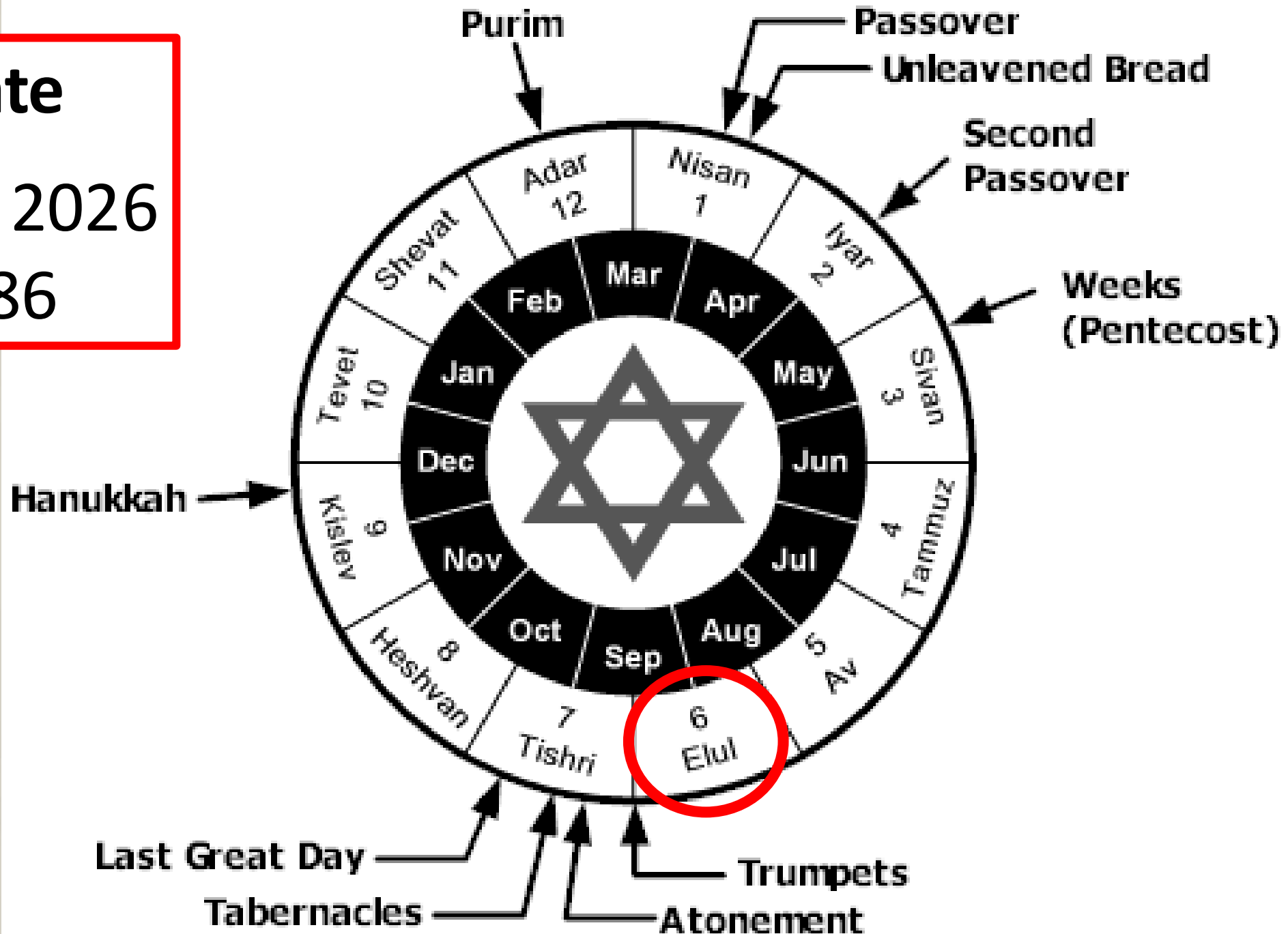
“Yet even now,” declares the Lord, “**Return**
[שׁוּב *shuv*] to Me with all your heart, and with
fasting, weeping and mourning; and rend
your heart and not your garments. Now
return [שׁוּב *shuv*] to the Lord your God, for
He is gracious and compassionate, slow to
anger, abounding in lovingkindness and
relenting of evil.” ” Joel 2:12-13



Today's date

September 6, 2026

24 Elul 5786



40 DAYS
RETURN TO ME

Elul, the 6th month of the Hebrew calendar, is an intense month of spiritual preparation and self accounting in preparation for standing before the Lord on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The journey of *teshuvah* - of return - to our true selves and to the Lord our Creator, is a journey built on honesty and integrity and a burning desire to become the person God intended us to be.

Every new day of the month of Elul is announced by the sounding of the *shofar* - the ancient wake up call that touches our soul and rekindles our belief in ourselves and our ability to repair who we are. The month of Elul is a gift to all who are ready to bear down and get to work. - Temple Institute



Sound the shofar

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8JSnXmFq8lM>



SEPTEMBER 2026

Fall Biblical Holidays

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6 TODAY!	7	8	9	10	11 Rosh Hashanah	12 Rosh Hashanah
13 Rosh Hashanah	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 Yom Kippur	21 Yom Kippur	22	23	24	25 Sukkot	26 Sukkot
27 Sukkot	28 Sukkot	29 Sukkot	30 Sukkot	1 Sukkot	2 Sukkot	3



— FIRST MELISSA —

TORAH TUESDAY

FINAL GATHERING

Tuesday, September 8

FAITH WALK **LIVE**

— WITH PASTOR TREY GRAHAM —

MONDAYS | 11:30 AM | CAFÉ

BEGINS OCTOBER 5!

Bring your lunch and join us as we
learn, ask questions,
and **study God's Word** together.



40 DAYS
RETURN TO ME

Deuteronomy 30

“The Return Chapter”

This week's Torah Portion, called
Nitzavim נִצָּבִים in Hebrew



Imagine...

- Imagine going through a years long period of pain and struggle, praying every day for deliverance.
- Imagine wondering if this painful chapter would ever end.
- Imagine living in bondage to an outside force that seemed to control you.
- Imagine having enough faith to ask God daily for a new start but wondering for years if He would ever deliver.
- Imagine receiving that deliverance and then going through a phase of healing before recognizing that you have to start living a life of faith in the “real world.”



And Moses summoned **all Israel** and said to them...
Deuteronomy 29:2

- The people of Israel have been wandering in the wilderness for 40 years after leaving slavery in Egypt and are soon to enter the Land of Promise.
- Moses, their leader and mentor, is about to die. He wants to give them spiritual and practical advice on how to live as people of faith after his death. He wants to remind them how to love and serve God.



“So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and **you call them to mind** [literally “**return** [שוב *shuv*] **to your heart**”] in all nations where the Lord your God has banished you” Deuteronomy 30:1

- If you have lived through times of peace and hardship, and are ready to put the times of spiritual wandering behind you...
- וְהָשִׁבְתָּ אֶל-לִבְּךָ בְּכָל *wahasebota el-lebabeka* return to your heart
- This phrase signifies a “total change” – Earl Kalland



“and you **return** [שׁוּב *shuv*] to the Lord your God
and obey [שְׁמַע *shema*] Him with all your heart and
soul according to all that I command you today, you
and your sons” Deuteronomy 30:2

Notice the action verbs:

- Return (*shuv*)
- Obey (*shema*)



“and you **return** [שׁוּב *shuv*] to the Lord your God
and obey [שְׁמַע *shema*] Him with all your heart and
soul according to all that I command you today, you
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Notice the scope of *teshuvah*:

- All your heart
- All your soul



“and you **return** [שׁוּב *shuv*] to the Lord your God and **obey** [שְׁמַע *shema*] Him with all your heart and **soul** according to all that I command you today, you and your sons” Deuteronomy 30:2

Notice the foundational guidelines:

- All the commandments of God’s Word



“and you **return** [שׁוּב *shuv*] to the Lord your God
and obey [שְׁמַע *shema*] Him with all your heart and
soul according to all that I command you today, you
and your sons” Deuteronomy 30:2

Notice the people involved:

- You (this generation)
- Your sons (the next generation)



“then the Lord your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you.” Deuteronomy 30:3

- Our sin and disobedience push us away from the Father
- Being away from God and away from the faith feels like spiritual exile
- We can't restore ourselves – the Lord is the actor
- God shows compassion even to sinners like us



“If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back.” Deuteronomy 30:4

- No matter how far you are away from the Father, there is always a road home
- Remember that the younger son in the parable of Jesus went to the “distant country” and then came home to the Father
- The Lord gathers His people
- The Lord brings us back when we repent/return



“The **Lord your God will bring you** into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.” Deuteronomy 30:5

- Exile is not the end of the story. Distance is not the end of the story. Failure is not the end of the story. Return is. – Devorah Channah
- *Teshuvah* is not pretending that we never wandered. It is recognizing that wandering does not have to determine where we ultimately arrive. We cannot change yesterday. But through *teshuvah*, yesterday does not have to control tomorrow. – Devorah Channah



Original Context vs. Our Experience Today

- As the nation of Israel would return to the Lord, God would bless them and bring them back from captivity having compassion on them.
- This was fulfilled in part by the return of the Babylonian exiles during the times of Ezra and Nehemiah. But a greater fulfillment of this would await the twentieth century, when God gathered Israel in the Promised Land. This modern regathering is a larger, broader, more evidently sovereign, and a more miraculous restoration than what was recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah after the Babylonian captivity.



“Moreover the Lord your God will circumcise your heart [spiritual renewal] and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.” Deuteronomy 30:6

Notice the people involved:

- You (this generation)
- Your descendants (the next generation)



“The Lord your God will inflict all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you.” Deuteronomy 30:7

- This has been prophetically fulfilled in the nation of Israel.
- In our lives, there will be judgment on those who try to lead believers away from the Lord and into sin.
- We have all been hurt. Will we seek revenge or leave their fate to the Lord?



“And you shall **again** obey [שְׁמַע *shema*] the Lord,
and observe all His commandments which I
command you today” Deuteronomy 30:8

- Every person, Jew or Gentile, is called to worship and follow the Messiah.
- Do you remember what it was like when you first believed?
- Who moved away... you or the Father?



“Then the Lord your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for **the Lord will again rejoice over you for good**, just as He rejoiced over your fathers;” Deuteronomy 30:9

- The Father rejoices when a lost child comes home



“if you obey [שמע *shema*] the Lord your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, if you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and soul.”

Deuteronomy 30:9-10



Rabbi Moses Maimonides enumerated four primary steps to the *teshuva* process:

1. Recognize and discontinue the improper action.
2. Verbally confess the action, thus giving the action a concrete form in your own mind.
3. Regret the action. Evaluate the negative impact this action may have had on yourself or on others.
4. Determine never to repeat the action. Picture a better way to handle it.

- <https://voices.sefaria.org/sheets/189688>



40 DAYS
RETURN TO ME

What stands in the way of my Repentance?

- More than anything, **Satan fears a soul in union with God**. He actively works to undermine your connection to the Father through lies, often rooted in fear and pride. **Repentance reconnects us with the Father and aligns us with life**, so likewise, he whispers to us...
- *Your way is better. Do you really want to admit that you were wrong?* (Pride). Or...
- *God will never accept you back. This time, you've gone too far* (Fear).
- To be repentant we must humble ourselves and approach God with courage. The writer of Hebrews implores us: *"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."* –Hebrews 4:16
- **Repentance requires a holy boldness rooted in gratitude and transformed identity**. When you know you are under the blood covering of Jesus and can do nothing without Him, that **crushes pride**. And when you know you are accepted and have an eternal seat at the Father's table, that **casts out fear**.
- **Repentance calls us to agree with the accusation that we are in the wrong— because we are**. It is to acknowledge the holiness of God with reverence. And it is to rejoice in His mercy, to choose His ways again, and walk in step with His Spirit on the road that leads to life.
- Whether we are held back from repentance by fear or pride— lies of the enemy and our own fallen nature—we must break those agreements and choose to return to the Father.



“For this commandment which I command you today is **not too difficult for you**, nor is it out of reach.” Deuteronomy 30:11

- In human strength, repentance and return are out of reach
- With the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit, WE CAN DO THIS
- Apostle Paul wrote, “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.” Galatians 5:16



Hosea 14



40 DAYS
RETURN TO ME

Imagine...

- Imagine living a life full of sin and immorality, repeatedly doing what you knew to be wrong
- Imagine hoping for deliverance from this sinful life and then having someone seek you, rescue you, forgive you and set you free
- Imagine living a life of holiness and joy, having been healed and forgiven
- Imagine then choosing to return to the “old life” because the attraction of your former ways was so strong that you went back to the places and the actions that you knew were harmful and rebellious
- Imagine someone being willing to rescue you again



Return [שׁוּב *shuv*], O Israel, to the Lord your God,
for you have stumbled because of your iniquity.

Hosea 14:1

- Why do I need to return? Because I wandered away from the Lord.
- What caused me to wander away? My iniquity (עֲוֹן *avon*... a lifestyle of wickedness).



Take words with you and **return** to the Lord. Say to Him, “Take away all iniquity and receive us **graciously**, that we may present the fruit [sacrifices] of our lips.” Hosea 14:2

- “But the word is very near you, **in your mouth and in your heart**, that you may observe it.”

Deuteronomy 30:14

- Repentance is a prayer of faith not just a thought.



[Say to the Lord...] “Assyria will not save us, we will not ride on horses; nor will we say again, ‘our god,’ to the work of our hands; for **in You** the orphan finds **mercy.**” Hosea 14:3

What will not bring me spiritual joy and healing?

- Worldly power
- False gods like cultural accomplishments
- Dependence on things



The Lord says... **I will heal their apostasy** [backsliding], **I will love them freely**, for My anger has turned away from them. I will be like the dew to Israel; he will blossom like the lily, and he will take root like the cedars of Lebanon. His shoots will sprout, and his beauty will be like the olive tree and his fragrance like the cedars of Lebanon. Those who live in his shadow will again raise grain, and they will blossom like the vine. His renown will be like the wine of Lebanon. Those who live in his shadow will again raise grain, and they will blossom like the vine. His renown will be like the wine of Lebanon. Hosea 14:4-7



This passage shows us what is restored when we return to the LORD

- **Growth** is restored (He shall grow).
- **Beauty** is restored (He shall grow like the lily).
- **Strength** is restored (lengthen his roots like Lebanon).
- **Value** is restored (His beauty shall be like an olive tree).
- **Delight** is restored (His fragrance like Lebanon).
- **Abundance** is restored (revived like grain... grow like the vine... scent shall be like the wine of Lebanon).

- <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/hosea-14/>



The Lord speaking...

O Ephraim [Israel], **what more have I to do with idols?** It is I who answer and look after you. I am like a luxuriant cypress; from Me comes your fruit.

Hosea 14:7-8

- But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control... Galatians 5:22-23



Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; whoever is discerning, let him know them. For **the ways of the Lord are right**, and the righteous will walk in them, but transgressors will stumble in them. Hosea 14:9

- *Teshuvah* / repentance is choosing to walk in the way of the Lord
- Which spiritual path am I choosing today?



The Hebrew word is "*teshuvah*," from the root "*shuv*," one of the most common verbs in the Hebrew Bible. It means to turn around. To go back. It is what you do with your feet when you have been walking the wrong way down a road, and there is no feeling in the word at all. Notice the idiom too, because in Hebrew **you do not feel *teshuvah*, you do it. *La'asot teshuvah*. To make repentance. A maneuver, not a mood.** - Eitan Bar

- Which path am I choosing today? Toward the Lord or away from Him?



“A maneuver, not a mood.” - Eitan Bar

Yeshua/Jesus said...

“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Matthew 11:28-30

