

OIM UPDATE

June 2012

With the celebration of the Feast of Weeks or *Shavuot* behind us, our ministry now turns to the long Summer months of work, to advance the Kingdom of God and His purposes. This *Shavuot* for 2012 will certainly be one that our family will never forget, as we have just endured the unexpected and tragic death of our dear friend and co-laborer in ministry, Shepherd David Pavlik, the congregational leader of Beit Yisrael in Orlando. Needless to say, our heavy hearts in his absence were lifted high by the joy of commemorating a feast that meant so much to Pastor David, who providentially went to be with the Lord on the day the *Shavuot* weekend commenced. Please join us in prayer for his grieving immediate family and congregational members during this transitional period, as the Lord invigorates wise and godly leadership.

This past month as the Omer Count was coming to a conclusion at *Shavuot*, the Spirit of the Lord was constantly challenging me with the contradiction that often comes with pursuing the ways of the Lord, and thoughts from other tempting sources which often invade our meditations. So upon reflecting on many of the technologically-proficient diversions, I was led to write this month's article entitled, "**The Faithful Fight**," about some Scriptural truths that address our common humanity, and the godly means to overcome the proliferation of distracting information readily available. It is my prayer that this overview will be used to encourage many of you to refocus on your respective gifts, callings, and abilities to serve the Most High—especially as during the next few months we should be steadily anticipating the Fall feasts.

Our family understands that the Almighty has a sovereign will for each and every one of us. We are patiently waiting for our house to sell, and for the proverbial "cloud" to lift, so in His timing we can follow our hearts back to Texas. In the interim, we are *diligently continuing* to move forward with the TNN Press Book Printing Project, with titles being formatted into both paperback and eBook. By the end of the year, we will likely be approaching thirty titles!

Just realizing that there are so many book titles, has given me reason to pause and praise the Lord that He has allowed Outreach Israel and TNN Online to be so productive in our writings, to address so many critical issues for the Messianic community of faith. **And, there is a definite season coming when we know that these written materials are going to be most imperative.** Without your faithful, steady support—both in your prayers and monthly offerings—none of this would be possible! For your partnership with us, we will be eternally grateful and confident that the Holy One continues to be pleased with your assurance in us.

Blessings and shalom, until the restoration of all things...

Mark Huey

THE FAITHFUL FIGHT

by Mark Huey

For faithful followers of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who are born from above by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit—the admonition by Yeshua the Messiah to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33), faces inherent challenges that, in many respects, are simply a result of humanity's innate fallen nature. After all, according to the early Genesis account, because the omniscient Creator formed human beings in His image (Genesis 1:26-27), He endowed finite men and women with the intellectual capacity to pursue knowledge and information—not only for instinctual survival, but for having curiosity regarding their surroundings. Hence, despite the Lord's prohibition, concerning partaking of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the idyllic setting of Eden, the clever deception of the serpent beguiled the first couple to follow their inquisitive human inclinations. Ever since the tragic event of the Fall, the devastating consequences and curses have not only impeded the intimate communion that people should be experiencing with the Most High, but also make life much more difficult to endure during each individual's mortal existence.

Nevertheless, regardless of this inauspicious commencement of human interactions with *all* that constitutes the environment, the Creator God has *always* had a sovereign plan for redeeming and restoring relationship with the pinnacle of His Creation, by the atoning work of His Seed (Genesis 3:15), the Messiah Yeshua. Consequently by His mercy and compassion, the Lord has given His chosen ones a Divinely detailed recorded testimony, the Holy Writ, preserved down through the ages to confirm what His will is. However, without faithfully consuming, assiduously contemplating, and most critically, willfully exercising the wisdom and truths elaborated in the Holy Scriptures—people will naturally default to their lustful, base creature instincts, and continue to be susceptible to the worthy adversaries of the world, the flesh, and the Devil (1 John 2:16; 2 John 1:7; Ephesians 6:11-12). This dilemma continues to plague not only the “natural” self, unable to comprehend spiritual matters, but even “spiritual” people seeking godliness—who even, with a high level of supernatural endowment, still struggle with the human condition, unless there is a concerted effort to acquire more conformity to the mind of the Messiah:

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spir-

itual *words*. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM [Isaiah 40:13]? **But we have the mind of Messiah**" (1 Corinthians 2:12-16).

But even with the Spirit of God imbuing people with the mind of the Messiah, Believers should humbly acknowledge their limitations with respect to the Almighty's infinite wisdom. Each of us should realize the ancient fundamental principle differing physical needs and spiritual realities. The Torah informs us,

"[T]hat He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD" (Deuteronomy 8:3b).

Hence, for lack of any other Divinely revealed source of what has proceeded out of the mouth and heart of the Lord (Deuteronomy 30:14; Luke 6:45), one can only turn to the Holy Scriptures for the eternal sustenance that surpasses all temporal physical existence:

"For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:12-13).

While the failed test for Adam and Eve precipitated battles between fallen human nature bound up in sin and death—and an inherent need for the indwelling power of the Spirit of God to change things (Romans chs. 6-7)—there are multiple examples of faithful followers of God described in the Holy Writ (Hebrews ch. 11), to encourage modern-day Believers to persevere and fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:12). However, it is critical to recognize that even the most ardent saint should never become complacent and ignorant about the forces of evil that exist, and continue to disrupt blessed communion with the Creator:

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*" (Ephesians 6:10-12).

Modern-Day Battles

There are some critical battles with ancient foes exploiting human

nature, increasingly confronting the children of God in our time—as the technological revolution of the past century, and in particular the computer explosion of the last two decades, has expanded exponentially. Take, for example, discovering uses for the electromagnetic spectrum with the invention of the radio and the ability to send audible voice transmissions through the air, to “receivers” located miles away, at the end of the Nineteenth Century and early decades of the Twentieth Century. By the late 1920s and certainly by the 1930s, the commercial radio had become commonplace in most homes in the West. The ability for people to express their views or opinions over the airwaves, whether for good or evil, to a broad audience—perhaps demonstrated some clarification to the ancient Biblical identification of the “prince of the power of air” who was warned about by Paul:

“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to **the prince of the power of the air**, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, **indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind**, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest” (Ephesians 2:1-3).

Through this historic technological advancement, people of the world could then receive knowledge and information directly into their thought life, by listening to a sophisticated electrified box with an amplifier and speaker in their homes, and later in their vehicles. Naturally, with the insatiable inherent human propensity to desire knowledge, the proliferation of radio listening skyrocketed, only to be followed in the 1930s and 1940s with the additional capability to transmit visual images. By the 1950s, the age of television arrived. With the transmission of “moving pictures” or “lights in a box” over the airwaves capturing the human eye, television broadcasters embraced the unique opportunity to simultaneously engage the willing “earport” entry into the thoughts of individuals, along with the insatiable “eyeport.” No doubt these purveyors of information (news) and entertainment, funded by advertising, understood the profound ancient conclusion found in the Book of Ecclesiastes, that **“the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor is the ear filled with hearing”** (Ecclesiastes 1:8b).

Consequently, human nature’s inclination to desire knowledge, with the physiological design to be either observant or distracted by sounds and visual images for survival, now had a mesmerizing electronic appliance to not only receive information, but eventually to turn to for entertainment. The “power of air” soon began to exercise an agenda to influence the hearts and minds of the willing recipients, by introducing a great deal of programming that was centered on promoting love for the things of this world, something warned about by the Apostle John:

“Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world” (1 John 2:15-16).

Needless to say, the generations existing, during the radio and television dominated eras, have received an unparalleled amount of information and knowledge communicated by these mediums. Since the 1960s, the literal bombardment of the senses has exploded with innovations, ranging from color images to satellite radio transmissions. These advances in technology eventually led to the advent and expansion of the Information Age or the Computer Age during the 1970s to 1990s, so that by the turn of the Twenty-First Century with the unparalleled development of the Internet, the computer was becoming as commonplace in households as a radio or television. Of course, the explosive growth of the Internet was not only a convenient tool for accessing knowledge and information, but the limitation of only a select number of radio or television stations was eliminated with alluring features, including interactivity and feedback from a rapidly expanding number of sources. In the late 2000s, cellular mobile telephone services began being combined with access to the Internet, and people were not exclusively bound to stationary locations, but became free to roam and maintain a continual connection to the World Wide Web.

Suffice it to say, a majority of modern people are becoming habitually engaged with all of these ubiquitous information devices. Once again utilizing human nature, a seemingly boundless battlefield for the constant thoughts and minds of people has been surreptitiously engaged by the “power of air.” Beware brothers and sisters—for without reservation, the undiscerning can readily be lured into following the thoughts and feelings of lustful flesh, lustful eyes, and boastful pride of life—unless there is a concerted effort to fight the good fight by faith in the undeniable Word of the Lord.

The Battle for Thought

It is critical that followers of Yeshua the Messiah understand, that beyond a shadow of doubt, as time and technological growth proceed—the greatest spiritual battle that engages every Believer will take place in the thoughts and minds of individuals. The Apostle Paul completely understood this challenge, and issued warnings that Believers need to take every thought captive to the obedience of the Messiah:

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. *We are destroying speculations*

and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Messiah*, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete” (2 Corinthians 10:3-6).

It is widely in a redeemed mind, *still being* widely conformed to the image of the Messiah (Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 2:16), where the carnal thoughts of mortal people (Psalm 94:11) contend with the eternal thoughts of the Holy One. But understand that God’s ways and thoughts are so much higher than those of humans:

“**For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,**’ declares the LORD. ‘**For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts**” (Isaiah 55:8-9).

Isaiah did not declare that God’s thoughts were incomprehensible, but instead states that He will accomplish all that He desires:

“**So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it**” (Isaiah 55:11).

What God has stated forth will unequivocally take place according to His ultimate will, and in His timing (which is largely unknowable). For those who claim a genuine relationship with the Almighty, it is imperative to know His Word, in order to Scripturally “filter” the increasing clutter of information that is going to enter the thoughts and minds of modern-era Believers. Consider how important it is to put on the full armor of God, in order to combat the schemes of the Devil:

“**Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.** Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, **HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH** [Isaiah 11:5], and **HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS** [Isaiah 59:17], and having shod **YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE** [Isaiah 52:7]; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil *one*. And take **THE HELMET OF SALVATION** [Isaiah 59:17], and **the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God**” (Ephesians 6:11-17).

All followers of the Messiah are at constant war with world forces and rulers of darkness, from wicked Heavenly places, also referred to as the power of air (Ephesians 2:2). But the antidote to combating and overcoming these invisible forces, which attack the thought life of people

from a rapidly increasing number of technological angles—is to absolutely know the truth *only* embodied in the Word of God. Without faithfully inculcating the mind with the Holy Scriptures, committing various verses to memory so that erroneous thoughts can be challenged by the prompting of the Holy Spirit by what the Word actually says, people are without an adequate defense. Paul's depiction of the spiritual armor indicates that one must have "loins girded with righteous truth," an image he took from Isaiah's more complete description of the coming Messiah, in whose image Believers are being conformed (Romans 8:29):

"Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. **The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, and He will not judge by what His eyes see, or make a decision by what His ears hear; but with righteousness He will judge the poor, and decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; and He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, and faithfulness the belt about His waist**" (Isaiah 11:1-5).

Yeshua the Messiah, in His ministry examples seen throughout the Gospels, was for us the ultimate demonstration of wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, and a delightful fear of the Lord. Yet, even the Messiah Himself will not judge by what His eyes see or what His ears hear, without comparing it to the very intentions of the Holy Word properly interpreted and understood. A significant example of this exercise is seen in the Devil's challenge to Yeshua, after a forty-day fast in the wilderness, when he actually used aspects of Scripture to tempt Yeshua into deviating from the true intentions of the Holy Writ:

"Yeshua, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry. And the devil said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.' And Yeshua answered him, 'It is written, "MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE [Deuteronomy 8:3]."' And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, 'I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours.' Yeshua answered him, 'It is written, "YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND SERVE HIM ONLY [Deuteronomy 6:13]."' And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from

here; for it is written, “HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU TO GUARD YOU [Psalm 91:11],” and, “ON *their* HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE [Psalm 91:12].” And Yeshua answered and said to him, “It is said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST [Deuteronomy 6:16].’” When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time” (Luke 4:1-13).

It should be recognized that while Satan attempted to deceive the Lord with a perversion of the Word of God, how much more should Believers in Yeshua be aware of his schemes (Ephesians 6:11), understanding that Satan cloaks himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14) seeking to devour (1 Peter 5:8) those who serve the Living God? It is simply not enough to just have “faith” in the redeeming work of Yeshua, but to be useful in His Kingdom’s work, one must be bathed in and cognizant of the Word (Ephesians 5:26). This is why it is required for Messiah followers to regularly study the Word—first with the foundational building blocks of the Torah, but equally as important, the balance of the Scriptures found in the words of the Prophets, Writings, and Apostles among their spiritual disciplines. Without inculcating the mind with the whole counsel of God’s Word, it is virtually impossible to battle error and the cleverness of the demonic influences which utilize the power of air, who like Satan, know the Word and can use it to deceive unsuspecting people.

With the current proliferation of electronically transmitted bits of information and knowledge, bombarding the senses with increasing intensity, the battles for the hearts and minds of people can be overpowering. Even in the First Century, when communication was extremely limited to audible and limited writings, the Apostle Paul wisely warned his young disciple Timothy about what to anticipate from certain individuals attempting to influence him with the temptations of the world, as the acquisition of wealth versus seeking God (Matthew 6), have historically been two of the main competing forces seeking to master humanity:

“But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. **But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance *and* gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses” (1 Timothy 6:9-12).**

Paul’s sound advice and admonition to Timothy is as applicable today, as the world steadily approaches the return of the Messiah. Consider that

the foundational tools to fighting the good fight of faith are: the fervent pursuit of righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness. Obviously these godly pursuits and the insights derived from them, are simply an expansion of what Yeshua commanded when He said to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33-34), promising that in so doing, all things necessary for sustenance would be added. With His righteousness sought and obtained, then perchance many of us may have the end-time privilege of leading many others to righteousness, as prophesied by Daniel:

“Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase” (Daniel 12:3-4).

To avoid the pitfalls of the encroachment of thoughts emanating incessantly from many different sources, what can be done? How does one become “unplugged” from the plethora of instinctual temptations to keep continually aware, about what is happening in the here and now, from a variety of electronic devices that a mere century ago, never invaded human thought life?

While it is not recommended that you *totally* discard the many convenient and useful communication tools, I would advise that you simply take some prayerful time to reflect upon just how much these devices are occupying your thought life and influencing your actions. If the personal assessment determines that there is an exorbitant amount of time simply consuming information and knowledge, for the sake of attempting to fill an insatiable bottomless pit hungering for more—perhaps turning off and tuning out would be beneficial to reconnect with the Holy One. After all, He desires communion and intimacy with those who truly love Him with all of their heart! Then again, many of you simply need to draw yourself some useful mental borders and allocate your time more wisely, using different technological devices at only a minimal level, and focusing more time on Bible study and things that lead to greater holiness.

Remember that fighting the good fight requires an informed battle plan, that not only takes into account the tendencies of the enemy recorded for us in Scripture—but also the godly means to not only thwart the attacks, but also advance the work of the Lord’s Kingdom on Earth. *To that end will the saints prevail!*

KOSHER YOUR PLATE

edited by Margaret McKee Huey

It is my intention to bring our Messianic cooks timely recipes of interest in each issue of the OIM News. In this issue, I have a wonderful recipe to serve at a summer party!

Easy Coconut Pie

2 tablespoons flour
¼ teaspoon salt
1 cup white sugar
6 tablespoons melted butter
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 eggs
1 can (12 oz) evaporated milk
1 cup shredded coconut

Mix together flour, salt, and sugar. Stir in melted butter and vanilla extract. Add eggs one at a time and mix well each time. Mix in evaporated milk and then coconut. Pour mixture into greased pie plate. Bake in preheated oven 325 degrees (165 degrees C) for 35-45 minutes or until the top begins to brown and the middle is set. Chill before serving. Wonderful treat!

Please submit your recipes to Margaret Huey at the OIM office for inclusion in this column and our upcoming cookbook "Kosher Your Plate."