

OIM UPDATE

November 2016

The last few months have been devoted to prayer, confession, and supplication unlike anytime in my life. For the first time since becoming a Believer, I truly considered the tragic possibility that the country where I reside was going to democratically choose socialism over the free enterprise capitalistic model that was envisioned by the formation of a constitutional republic based on Judeo-Christian principles back in 1787. For weeks on end, particularly as the Election Day approached, every morning as I entered into conscientiousness, I found myself crying out for **mercy, mercy, and more mercy** from our Heavenly Father. For lack of a better example, I frequently recalled the prayers recorded by the Prophet Daniel, as he recognized the timeline laid out by Jeremiah's prophecies (Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:10) and interceded for his fellow Jews in Babylonian exile:

“So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek *Him* by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes. I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said, ‘Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, **we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances. Moreover, we have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes, our fathers and all the people of the land. Righteousness belongs to You, O Lord, but to us open shame, as it is this day—to the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those who are nearby and those who are far away in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of their unfaithful deeds which they have committed against You. Open shame belongs to us, O Lord, to our kings, our princes and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. To the Lord our God *belong* compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him; nor have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His teachings which He set before us through His servants the prophets. Indeed all Israel has transgressed Your law and turned aside, not obeying Your voice; so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him. Thus He has confirmed His words which He had spoken against us and against our rulers who**

ruled us, to bring on us great calamity; for under the whole heaven there has not been done *anything* like what was done to Jerusalem” (Daniel 9:3-12).

Needless to say, I certainly do not believe it was my individual prayers which generated the electoral results—but instead the cumulative effect of the millions of other grieving saints, who likewise cried out to our Creator God with unceasing prayers. In so doing, many were led to confess their sin and the sin of their fathers, and plead and implore the Holy One for mercy and compassion (Leviticus 26:42). Thankfully by His grace, the Almighty One gazed down from His Heavenly throne and recognized that there were indeed, many more than the negotiated ten righteous souls of Sodom (Genesis 18:16-33) residing in the United States, who could continue to fulfill God’s work to take the gospel of truth to the nations of the world.

Nevertheless, from my extremely limited perspective of being dangled over the potential abyss of living in a society substantially turned over to the evil inclinations of humanity—such was a frightening and I hope life altering experience for all those who claim to be a part of the Body of Messiah. Consequently in my moments of intercession, I was led to consider many of the Biblical and historical facts which led us to this critical juncture. I have tried to capture these things in this month’s lead article, “**A Cultural Crossroad.**” Hopefully, as we move forward and have been given a “line extension” in time to advance God’s Kingdom on Earth, the Messianic movement will continue to mature and flourish in anticipation of the Messiah’s return.

Finally, significant progress continues to be made with Messianic Apologetics expanding its outreach via social media. During the past year, J.K. McKee has made efforts to be quite active on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. We appreciate your efforts of partnering with us via our ongoing Technology Fund, as we make upgrades to our computer equipment and abilities. The transfer of information from the old Messianic Apologetics website to the new WordPress based site will be completed by the end of the year. We are also pleased to announce that audio teachings are now available via a new Messianic Apologetics channel on both iTunes and Podomatic, which you can download via your iPhone or Android.

Until the Messianic restoration of all things...

Mark Huey

A CULTURAL CROSSROADS

by Mark Huey

For those of us living in the United States, the past few months in anticipation of a national election and a new governmental leadership, have been extremely stressful. The free will choice of the American population, given the reported flaws of the final two candidates, created conflict peppered with angst, as well meaning people sought peace in their constitutional right to cast a vote. Personally, for the first time since the turbulent 1960s, I discerned the possibility that a dramatic cultural shift was about to take place. But unlike the naïve God-less teenager—who fifty years ago relied upon whatever the world system or “power of air” (Ephesians 2:2) was broadcasting into the airwaves to influence public opinion—my current perception was different. Instead, after almost forty years of pursuing the Messiah Yeshua with the indwelling Holy Spirit teaching and comforting my soul (John 14:16, 26; 2 Corinthians 1:3-7), I had been blessed with eyes to see and ears to hear the manifestation of spiritual warfare that the Spirit of God was revealing as Election Day approached. In my opinion, the continuation of the American culture, based on Judeo-Christian principles, was palpably threatened. Hence, I believe we were at a critical cultural crossroad—and my heartfelt concern for the future of our country, as the principal world power established to defend the relatively nascent State of Israel, was unlike any apprehension I had ever experienced before. As a result of the sleep-depriving anxiety—like millions of other Believers witnessing the same state of affairs—my primary reaction was to fervently pray for God’s mercy. As I searched the Scriptures and reflected on world history for how God intervened in other crucial times, the following verses came to mind occasionally—as my pleading, beseeching, and supplicating intercession grew:

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Messiah Yeshua” (Philippians 4:6-7).

In addition to interceding intensely for the direction of our country, the annual trek through the Torah cycle providentially had the Book of Deuteronomy being studied during the waning months of the recent campaign season, along with the commemoration of the Fall high holidays. In many regards, the five books of the Torah of Moses can be considered to function as the written “constitution” of Ancient Israel. Deuteronomy or *Devarim* (דְּבָרִים) as the final book, incorporates Moses’ concluding summary and recapitulation of the statutes, laws, and regulations.

This year, when reading and studying through those summary passages—given the political electoral decisions being made in early November, and the real potential for what many were calling a “constitutional crisis”

with certain results—the parallels between what was envisioned by the framers of the U.S. Constitution came to mind often. After all, when the founding documents, including the Constitution of the United States, were being drafted and adopted, a significant number of the framers and authors of those documents were influenced by Christian ethics and moral principles, with many being genuine followers of the Messiah. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit was evident in many of the hearts of those used to draft the provisions incorporated in the Constitution of the United States of America.

As a result, the generally agreed upon understanding about the fallen nature of humanity, was addressed by establishing a scheme of government which would incorporate balancing mechanisms to keep any one person from gaining too much power. For most assuredly, from previous experience and knowledge about world history, just about everyone in that era understood the universal principle later encapsulated in Lord Acton's precise definition about power: **“power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”** Hence, provisions were made in the U.S. Constitution that included what are known as “checks and balances” to prevent any one branch of government, or any one individual, from abusing the power that they were to receive.

Perhaps one of the most disturbing aspects of the Fall campaign was the much discussed realization that genuine corruption within the government of the United States had simply become a given among the ruling class. *Light was finally being cast on the misdealing hidden in the darkness.* Television commentators railed, articles and books were written, and movies and documentaries were produced—which all delved into many of the challenges that beset the candidates of the two primary parties vying for political power. One of the most ballyhooed claims dealt with what was being called absolute self-dealing and corruption by one of the candidates. The evidence of using power and position to enrich oneself was overwhelming, as the ability to prosecute the case was frozen by the judicial system. Nevertheless, the intensity of the campaign was in full bloom this past September.

As the 229th anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution took place on September 17th, the Torah portion *Shoftim* was being considered. In Deuteronomy 16:18-21:9, I discovered one critical area that the framers of the U.S. Constitution did not include when they were drafting the articles for American governance. After all, the founding fathers of the late Eighteenth Century were essentially successful farmers, traders, professionals, businessmen, bankers, doctors, lawyers, or land owners—who did not necessarily envision the problem that money would or could create in the electoral processes of the early Twenty-First Century. For the most part, those involved in governmental activities considered it temporary service to the nation which had been created, and not a permanent status for life. None-

theless, they did foresee the need to include a provision for impeachment that addressed the problem of bribery in the following oblique way found in Article 2, Section 4 Impeachment:

The President, Vice President and all civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, **Bribery**, or other High crimes and Misdemeanors.

In other words, “bribery” was something that the framers of our Constitution knew the human heart was capable of falling into—along with treason, high crimes, and misdemeanors. Of course even today, the ability to prosecute someone for any of these misdeeds requires considerable legal arguments, to determine exactly what rises to the level of removal from office.

But as I pondered *Shoftim* portion, I wondered why there was not more consideration for how officials, magistrates, and judges can be so readily influenced by the bribes of others. Perhaps the founders could have been more explicit when it comes to the corruption that can result from monetary bribes, as noted in this passage that reminds us about how bribes pervert justice:

“You shall **appoint** for yourself judges and officers in all your towns which the LORD your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and **they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. You shall not distort justice; you shall not be partial, and you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous. Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, that you may live and possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you**” (Deuteronomy 16:18-20).

The difference, found in the Torah, was that the judges and officers would be appointed by the various tribal leaders of Ancient Israel, rather than elected democratically as found in the American Constitution. But the universal principle found in the words that “**a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous,**” must be considered. *This takes one right back to the fallen nature of humanity.* Without getting into all of the details which have led settled law to the “Citizens United vs. Federal Election Commission” Supreme Court decision, suffice it to say that the ability for money (or wealth/mammon) to corrupt humans goes right back in the annals of time. In fact, in His Sermon on the Mount, Yeshua addressed the choice that every person, regardless of whether they seek to be a ruler, judge, or public servant, must contend with in life. It all comes down to who or what every person is going to serve, which according to Yeshua is one of two masters:

“**No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth**” (Matthew 6:24).

Here in very succinct terms, Yeshua explains the great dilemma presented to every person who has ever lived—but most especially issues a challenge to those who would claim to follow Him. Consider the stark reality that if a person in a governmental position does **not** claim a relationship with the Risen Savior, which gives knowledgeable access to the Creator God—then their allegiance is either to self, or a plethora of other gods, with the misperceived security derived from the acquisition of wealth as a motivational force. But without judging another person’s heart on where he or she stands before the Almighty, observing the actions of a person versus what one says, should give a perceptive person a good idea about just who or what another individual is serving. This wise warning was mentioned by Yeshua, just after speaking about the choice of masters, with the reminder that His followers need to be self-critical in order to avoid hypocrisy:

“Do not judge so that you will not be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and behold, the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye” (Matthew 7:1-5).

So with those words taken to heart, our prayers should be consistent for all who seek to rule over us in governmental positions. We are not to judge their motivations, but ask the Holy One to give them wisdom, discernment, and merciful hearts when it comes to making decisions that impact those under their authority.

This is why another passage in *Shoftim* made so much sense regarding what the Lord expected the kings of Israel to do when they were in power. Here, the Torah was very explicit on how Moses instructed the eventual kings of Israel to maintain their humility once they were elevated to rule:

“When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, and you possess it and live in it, and you say, ‘I will set a king over me like all the nations who are around me,’ you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses, **one** from among your countrymen you shall set as king over yourselves; you may not put a foreigner over yourselves who is not your countryman. Moreover, he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor shall he cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, since the LORD has said to you, ‘You shall never again return that way.’ He shall not multiply wives for himself, or else his heart will turn away; nor shall he greatly increase silver and gold for himself. Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. It shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and

these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted up above his countrymen and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left, so that he and his sons may continue long in his kingdom in the midst of Israel” (Deuteronomy 17:14-20).

Of course, these instructions were for the kings of Israel who were beholden to the Torah of Moses. In the case of the American president, the U.S. Constitution is the law of the land. But if you take a brief look at this passage, you will note a few values that could be applied to any person who has been elevated to power over others, even in a constitutional republic based on democratic principles. In fact, some of these principles were discretely incorporated into the text of the Constitution, and others adhered to by many of the Presidents who have presided over the United States of America. These include:

1. Choose a countryman or someone (born American, no foreign born leaders)
2. Never return to Egypt or its ways (do not return to European monarchial systems)
3. Do not take additional wives, and avoid interlocking treaties (ancient entanglement with treaties)
4. Take money or increase wealth (avoid bribery)
5. Write the Torah with the priests (understand the Constitution)
6. Read Torah and its statutes daily (appreciate validity of established laws)
7. Learn to fear the Lord (grave responsibility)
8. Maintain humility (daily prayer seeking guidance from above)

As you can see, the influence of the Holy Bible had a profound impact on the formation of the American culture and the writing of the U.S. Constitution. I highly recommend you take the time to read an article by Stephen McDowell, entitled, “Noah Webster, God’s Law, and the United States Constitution: The Influence of the Bible on the Development of American Constitutionalism” (accessible online at: http://providencefoundation.com/?page_id=1948), and you can review the unique trail through the many historical documents, ultimately influenced by the Scriptures, distilled into the U.S. Constitution.

When reading through many of these documents, you will find just how close the American culture came to a critical crossroad which would have had incredibly traumatic consequences for the world we live in today. One quoted paraphrase that really caught my attention, was attributed to some post-presidency letters written by Thomas Jefferson regarding the ability for the young nation to prosper and thrive. In those correspondences Jefferson warned of the detrimental effects of a centralized government, combined with the corruption inherent in political circles. Upon reading

these comments and references to them by various editorial writers, the state of affairs surrounding the recent election cycle generated serious concern for the direction our country was going to take. Attempting to weave in various prophetic statements found in the Holy Scriptures, just added to the parlor games being debated by God-fearing people from all spiritual persuasions. Needless to say, because I was more familiar with the Holy Scriptures, I focused my energies on prayer, appealing to God for mercy, and His compassion to a people and a nation that I believe still has a unique calling to stand with the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

Thankfully, by the grace of God, the result which occurred during this election cycle has given many hope for the days, weeks, months, and years ahead. Around our home, we have praised the Lord for what we have called a “line extension,” before the End of the Age trauma commences. Quite frankly, I have no good reason for understanding why the Holy One of Israel had so much grace toward His people, other than the cries for mercy! There is no doubt in my mind that there were untold millions of Believers who followed this Scripture to the letter:

“[A]nd My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Surely, millions of God-fearing Americans humbled themselves, and sought the face of the Almighty in fervent prayer. Many confessed their sin and turned from their wicked ways. As a result, the Holy One heard the pleas and cries from Heaven, forgave the sin, and is now in the process of healing our land, the United States of America.

The American cultural crossroad was upon us. We stopped, paused, considered the alternatives, and by the grace of God, chose to return to a path which adheres to Christian principles much more so than the other choice. Now it is time to pray for unity and healing between those who are diametrically opposed in the worldview that was chosen. And while we are at it, continue to pray for the protection of those in governmental leadership—so that the American culture, based on Judeo-Christian principles, will continue to stand with the State of Israel for the foreseeable future.

Let me close with some of the most poignant words regarding how the Creator God sovereignly places various governmental authorities over people, in order to ultimately accomplish His will for humanity. Here in his writing to the Romans, the Apostle Paul summarized how Believers as citizens of a society should conduct their lives. These are words that I have no doubt were certainly being considered when the U.S. Constitution was agreed upon:

“Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are estab-

lished by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for *rulers* are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. **Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled *the law*.** For this, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET' [Exodus 20:13-15, 17; Deuteronomy 5:17-19], and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF' [Leviticus 19:18]. Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of *the law*. *Do this*, knowing the time that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Yeshua the Messiah, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its lusts*" (Romans 13:1-14).

When you reflect on Paul's words, in light of the cultural crossroad just reached and the path chosen—all who believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob because of faith in the accomplished work of the Messiah Yeshua should say without reservation: "*Hallelujah!*" We have seen prayers answered, and accordingly, need to take the reprieve as an opportunity to "put on the Lord Messiah Yeshua, and stop making provision for the flesh—for its cravings" (Romans 13:14, TLV)—so that we might instead further advance God's Kingdom on Earth, until the Messianic restoration of all things...

MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS UPDATE

November 2016

Dear Friends:

I am purposefully writing this update on November 7, one day before the U.S. presidential election—which regardless of the outcome, will be dominating many of our thoughts for the remainder of the month. We



are, without question, at a critical juncture in Western civilization. How the United States of America goes, does determine how much of the world goes.

I have believed that the election of one of the two candidates for president, would only give Believers in the United States a line extension of time, to make full use of their religious freedoms. We would not see the repeal of various laws, such as the legalization of homosexual marriage, but instead see a halt to any further radical social changes. Yet as I have hoped for a line extension of time, for the faith community to continue the work of the Kingdom of God—**does American evangelical Christianity deserve such a line extension?** Would it make proper usage of another eight to twelve years of full religious freedom? Or, would it be lulled into a false sense of security? To be honest, I am not totally sure that American evangelicalism deserves it. While I have genuinely benefitted from American evangelicalism of the past, it has failed more and more people in its unwillingness to directly confront sin—and then with people considering Torah observant Messianics as some kind of “legalists.” And, the growing evangelical distance from Israel cannot go unnoticed, either.

Regardless of what happens tomorrow, this past year Messianic Apologetics has made avid usage of social media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. This past Summer, new catalogues of audio and video teachings have started to be added to our depository of information. Our new WordPress based website is compatible with all mobile devices. This past month new channels for Messianic Apologetics on iTunes and Podomatic have been added. Along with this, I will be making use of Periscope, and I have new profiles for myself on Pinterest and Google+. I am not entirely sure how each of these venues is going to be employed. But I will make use of the venues of social media more and more, particularly as the Messianic movement is entering into a season seeing itself enlarged like never before—as the return of the Messiah becomes a steadily encroaching reality.

This month, our Wednesday Night Bible Study on 2 Corinthians will come to a close, with the release of *2 Corinthians for the Practical Messianic* as something to be anticipated sometime at the end of the year. Before a new study begins, I will be recording the remaining Audio Archive Studies—but more than anything else will have to finish the massive book *Salvation on the Line: The Nature of Yeshua and His Divinity*. Suffice it to say, because of our uncertain times, I am motivated to work hard, and make my contribution!

Until next month...

J.K. McKee