



# OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

REACH    TEACH    ENCOURAGE    DISCIPLE

APRIL 2013  
WHEAT AND TARES



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## STATEMENT OF BELIEF

*Outreach Israel Ministries and TNN Online*

There is One Almighty Creator God of the Universe, who has revealed Himself to us in the manifestations of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) came in fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies of the Scriptures and is fully God. It is mandatory for us to believe in a Divine Redeemer to be saved. Salvation is a free gift of God to all who receive Messiah Yeshua into their lives and confess of their sins. Those who reject Messiah will be consigned to eternal punishment.

The Holy Scriptures, Genesis-Revelation, are the inspired, infallible Word of God as revealed in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts.

There is only one assembly of chosen ones/elect, the congregation of Israel, of which all Believers in Messiah are a part. God does not have two groups of elect: Israel and "the Church."

The Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy) is the foundation of all Scripture, was followed by our Messiah Yeshua, and is to still be followed and studied by Believers today.

Yeshua the Messiah is coming to gather the saints after the Tribulation period.

OIM is an *agapē* ministry, freely and benevolently giving the vast majority of its teachings and resources, without charge, to those who desire to be spiritually nourished.

*For a fuller Statement of Faith, consult the OIM website*

**Outreach Israel News** is the monthly newsletter of Outreach Israel Ministries, a non-profit organization with an emphasis on reaching, teaching, and encouraging the Messianic community. Subscription to **Outreach Israel News** is without cost and supported only by donation.

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# OIM UPDATE

April 2013

This past month was a busy month, of traveling by car to Florida to attend a family wedding, and of completing our relocation back to Dallas. We hauled one last trailer with some final items, which we were unable to stuff into the rental trucks required for the principal move in November-December 2012. This appropriately named “epilogue” excursion was followed by participation in two Pass-over *seders*, and with me hosting an out of town “Christian” guest for the concluding days of the Festival of Unleavened Bread. In addition, we have been busy adjusting to our new environment by attending a number of regional Messianic congregations, and enjoying the opportunity to visit with former friends and acquaintances from our previous years in North Texas. Over the past four months, we have visited *Shabbat* services at some unique expressions of the Messianic community of faith, and can testify to the diverse explosive growth in this area over the past fourteen years when we had been away. Now when encountering some of our Christian friends from years past who might ask where we have been and what are we doing, just mentioning the term “Messianic” is responded with a knowing affirmation, rather than the perplexed looks we remember from years past.

With this input flooding my thoughts, it has always been my sincere desire to communicate through my articles what the Spirit of the Lord is currently teaching me, to help encourage others in their respective walks with the Messiah. But in addition to those encounters mentioned above, I have been writing a book with the working title *Rules of Engagement*. This is planned to address many of the reasons that our modern-day Judeo-Christian culture, where many in the West were raised, has lost or is losing (depending on your perspective) the culture war. This work has had me asking, seeking, and knocking persistently on the Father’s door—to find out from the Holy One just why this has been/is happening. One of His many answers from the Scriptures has led me to write this month’s lead article entitled, “**Wheat and Tares.**” Here I analyze the convoluted mixture of how the parabolic wheat and tares of Yeshua’s teaching are to coexist until the final harvest. Hopefully, some of the conclusions and suggestions made will be used to initiate heartfelt prayers, for those desperately in need of the Spirit’s comfort.

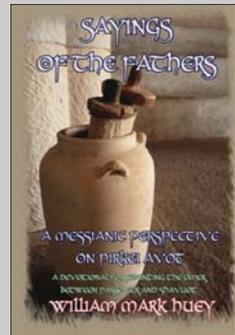
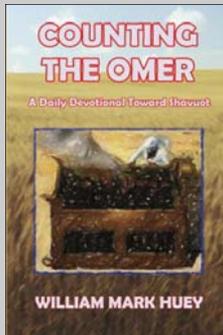
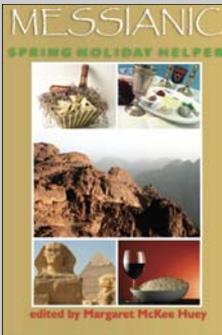
We invite you to continue supporting the **Theological Defense Trust** (described later in the newsletter). Your financial contributions will help continue the labor that Outreach Israel and TNN Online are committed to do, as we steadily produce Scripturally sound and coherently written publications, validating the legitimacy of Messianic restoration of all things occurring in our day, *and* that it ultimately is a genuine move of God by His Holy Spirit. We have committed our life’s work to this endeavor, and gratefully appreciate each and everyone who has already been supportive of our efforts with your intercessory prayers and monetary support!

Finally, for both this month and next, during the Counting of the Omer to *Shavuot*, we have a few seasonal publications that are available for your edification. The *Messianic Spring Holiday Helper*, *Counting the Omer: A Daily Devotional Toward Shavuot*, and *Sayings of the Fathers: A Messianic Perspective on Pirkei Avot* have each been written to help Messianic Believers understand more about the blessings of following the commands of the Lord during this time of the year. They are all available in paperback or eBook for Amazon Kindle.

Advancing His Kingdom, until the restoration of all things...

Mark Huey

# IT IS STILL NOT TOO LATE TO GET THESE BOOKS FOR THE SPRING HOLIDAYS!



## AVAILABLE IN PAPERBACK AND EBOOK FOR AMAZON KINDLE!



The theological pressure upon Outreach Israel Ministries and TNN Online is growing considerably by the day! While we surely appreciate the prayers and moral support that many of you have offered, we need you to join with us as a committed monthly contributor, to help alleviate the financial stress that accompanies the dedicated, full-time service to fight the spiritual battles that seem to perpetually rage. Not enough people, in today's Messianic world, are going to be able to have well reasoned responses to the attacks that are coming, unless a ministry like ours can continue to produce the studies required. As the stress increases upon us, we need to see that any other pressure is considerably relieved.

We have established the **Theological Defense Trust** (TDT) to elicit monthly, quarterly, and annual financial support, for our ongoing, long-term efforts in helping to contribute to a Messianic theology that is faithful to the whole counsel of God from Genesis to Revelation. Via the emergence of the Messianic movement, we believe that the Holy One has inaugurated a distinct move that will ultimately culminate in the return of Yeshua the Messiah, *and* is something that will involve a multitude of saints who have a testimony of salvation in Him and who obey the Torah's commandments (Revelation 12:17; 14:12). We know that properly researched and scholastically engaged *written publications*, are critical for advocating and reinforcing this conviction. This includes detailed analyses of the different aspects of Torah observance, the critical issues and sensationalistic trends that confuse and upset many Messianic Believers, as well as steadily producing written commentaries on all books of the Bible, however long this may take.

The **Theological Defense Trust** has been conceived to give those in the Messianic community of faith, the opportunity to participate and co-labor in this imperative work by financially supporting the efforts of Outreach Israel Ministries, TNN Online, and TNN Press on a consistent basis. By becoming faithfully invested in our endeavors financially, you will be recognized as a valued trustee, and we will endeavor to keep you informed via e-mail and telephone conversations when spoken dialogue is appropriate, about any critical theological issues that will be erupting in the months and years to come. Additionally as a trustee, we will mail you a volume of any new titles for your personal theological library, so that you will be equipped with credible resources to combat the complex challenges which will be facing the Messianic movement.

# WHEAT AND TARES

by Mark Huey

In His infinite wisdom, our Heavenly Father has chosen, through the recorded teachings of His Son, Yeshua the Messiah, to communicate deep spiritual truths through a variety of parabolic examples, taken from His created order. To answer His Disciples' inquiry about why He spoke in parables, Yeshua's simple answer was to inform them about mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven in agrarian terms they could comprehend and certainly remember, as He noted Isaiah's prophecy that compared two types of people. This involved those who would see and hear, compared to those who would be unable to grasp spiritual truths:

"And the disciples came and said to Him, 'Why do You speak to them in parables?' Yeshua answered them, **"To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. For whoever has, to him *more* shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.** Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, **"YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES, OTHERWISE THEY WOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM [Isaiah 6:9-10]."** **But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.** For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see *it*, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it*." (Matthew 13:10-17).

This was done to fulfill the Messianic prophecy found in Psalm 78:2, regarding one of the Messiah's primary methods of teaching:

"All these things Yeshua spoke to the crowds in parables, and He did not speak to them without a parable. *This was* to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: **"I WILL OPEN MY MOUTH IN PARABLES; I WILL UTTER THINGS HIDDEN SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD" [Psalm 78:2]"** (Matthew 13:34-35).

From the words of Yeshua, one can conclude that there are going to be (1) people who understand and (2) people who cannot understand, when spiritual concepts are being uttered. In the context of these statements, the parable of the wheat and the tares is included, despite the Father's inherent desire that no one should perish: "the Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). In this case to describe aspects of the Kingdom of Heaven, the landowner represents the Creator God, the

enemy is the Devil, the wheat is Believers, the tares are non-Believers, and the slaves are merely workers in the field of the Kingdom. Consequently, regardless of the challenges of dealing with the proliferation of deceptive untruths being taught by tares sown into the Father's wheat fields of saints—there is, nonetheless, the absolute instruction that they are to remain until the end, when the Father will send the reapers to conduct the ultimate harvest:

“Yeshua presented another parable to them, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ And he said to them, ‘An enemy has done this!’ The slaves said to him, ‘Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?’ But he said, ‘No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. **Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, ‘First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn’**” (Matthew 13:24-30).

In this agricultural analogy, any farmer would know that the wheat and tares have two distinct physical properties from nature. Spiritually speaking, the wheat is likened to the Believers who will eventually bear fruit, while the tares (poisonous weeds) are sown by the enemy to essentially extract valuable nutrition and water from the soil, impeding the growth of the wheat. The response by the landowner, who is representative of the Heavenly Father, to the question from his slaves about prematurely gathering up the tares expressed in this parable, is two-fold. First, there is the probability that while trying to physically extract the tares from the field, some of the good wheat might also be uprooted before it is ripe for harvest. In addition, while the tares might initially look like wheat in the early stages of growth, the landowner (Lord) wants them to remain for whatever His purposes are until the final harvest. The instruction to those slaves laboring in the fields is to just be about the Father's work, in whatever field they have been called to work—and patiently wait for the landowner's reapers to sort out the tares from the wheat, at the time of harvest.

This relatively simple agricultural example, from the heart of the Father through the instruction of Yeshua, has profound implications in the modern era—as errant teaching by tares sown in among the wheat has increased in the emerging Messianic community of faith, and as it has in Christianity over many centuries. With this challenge in mind, perhaps the Father is simply allowing the tares sown within the ranks of the wheat—to be used to strengthen, refine, and challenge the wheat to adhere to the command to “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” Yeshua reminds His followers that through the course of time, the Father causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends the rain on the righteous and unrighteous, without discrimination:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR [Leviticus 19:18] and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing *than others*? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:43-48).

Since wheat and tares each require the sun and rain to grow in the whitening fields as the harvest approaches, perhaps the wheat should spend more time extending love to and praying for the tares in their midst—with the hope that their witness will be used by God to lessen the damage caused by the tares. *But be wary of the very nature of tares.* The term appearing in Matthew 13:24-30 for “tare” is *zizania* (ζιζάνιον), “a kind of darnel, bastard wheat...resembling wheat except that the grains are black” (*Thayer, 272*). After separating the wheat from the chaff, the harvesters have to literally pick out any of the zizania to avoid its ill effects on any of the wheat to be consumed. In fact, when one pictures the two plants growing side by side toward the time of harvest, it is the tares which actually have more granular weight, almost deceptively hiding in the field of wheat. While the Father’s reapers will know the difference, the instructions to the inquisitive slaves to *not* pull up the tares, indicates that they are to continue their work, knowing about the distinctions, but not making premature judgments about what is wheat versus what is a tare. So in ministry terms, if someone happens to be a worker in the field, or simply wheat (Believer) by nature rather than a tare (non-Believer)—perhaps gratefulness for the graceful gift of God should be the focus, as one walks in the good works that were prepared beforehand:

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.* For we are His workmanship, created in Messiah Yeshua for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Yet, the good works of loving and praying for the tares, **does not mean** that the wheat should be blindly ignorant of the worthless nutritional and spiritual value of what the tares communicate, while they flourish in the fields. This is where the need to plea for discernment should be employed by all the wheat, which is constantly being swayed by the tare’s winds of doctrines, human trickery, and by craftiness in deceitful scheming, as noted later in Ephesians 4 by the Apostle Paul:

“And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Messiah; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of

Messiah. As a result, we are no longer to be children, **tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming**; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Messiah, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness” (Ephesians 4:11-19).

It is in this passage from Paul to Believers in Asia Minor, where he explained the Father’s plan for equipping the saints for their orderly good works of service, to build up the body of the Messiah, attain the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, and grow and mature in Him—on the way to the ultimate harvest. However, because the enemy has sown tares with their deceptive teachings in the fields of wheat—strife, division, and general confusion among the saints continue to flourish. But this should not be the case for a maturing Messianic community of faith, “for God is not *a God* of confusion but of peace, as in all the [assemblies] of the saints” (1 Corinthians 14:32-33). So with a doctrinally convoluted state of affairs now troubling much of the ranks of the emerging Messianic restoration—beyond praying for more discernment to not be influenced by the teaching of the tares—is it possible that some of the wheat, or those destined to become wheat, are susceptible to being deceived by the errant teaching of the tares (false messiahs and false prophets), as warned by Yeshua Himself?

“Then if anyone says to you, ‘Behold, here is the Messiah,’ or ‘There *He is*,’ do not believe *him*. For false Messiahs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, **so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect**. Behold, I have told you in advance” (Matthew 24:23-25).

As we take the need to pray for others, seek discernment from the Father, and avoid the pitfalls of false teaching(s) which will proliferate as the End of the Age approaches—perhaps there is a more critical but less spoken truth which needs to be considered, given the distinctions between the tares bundled for burning and the wheat gathered for the barns.

In another agrarian analogy that can be readily understood and remembered, Yeshua warned His Disciples about false prophets who are actually ravenous wolves in sheep’s clothing, compared to plants that do not bear good fruit. Unlike the relatively passive non-fruit bearing tares that are simply growing up beside the wheat, these wolves are consciously entering into the fields (communities of faith) whether they know they are wolves or not, and expressing false truths and concepts that are leading many astray, or at the very least, creating confusion in the ranks. These aggressive false prophets are

producing bad fruit, and in the end, they also will be cut down and thrown into the fire. However, since they believe they are working for the Lord by using His name to cast out demons and perform miracles, they are utterly confounded when they hear Yeshua's response to their pleas to depart from Him as practitioners of lawlessness:

**“Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits. Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS [Psalm 6:8]”** (Matthew 7:15-23).

Just the thought of ever hearing the words *“I never knew you,”* should be enough to make any person who reads and knows the Holy Scriptures shudder with the chance that despite all of the things they might be doing in the name of Yeshua, it is possible that the Messiah never knew them personally. Twice in this passage, Yeshua noted that whether someone is a false prophet, like a wolf in sheep's clothing, or a bad tree bearing bad fruit—the implication is that His followers are to be inspecting the fruit that originates from those in their midst. *Wheat should be able to detect the tares growing up around it,* and most certainly the false teaching coming from wolves! While the Father is the ultimate Judge, being ignorant of what is transpiring in and around a community of faith should not be acceptable. The challenge for the saints individually is to not be intimidated by the accusation that you are “judging” someone (Matthew 7:1), simply because you may question an errant teaching or point out the bad fruit resulting from their efforts. When the consequences of someone's teaching is confusion, strife, division, discord, jealousy, and any number of other negative results—then one can objectively conclude that the teaching is predominantly from the misguided flesh of the individual teacher (Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Timothy 6:3-5; James 4:1), or perhaps from the schemes of the Devil (2 Corinthians 2:11; Ephesians 6:11). Just imagine how much further along to maturity the Messianic community of faith would be if it simply took this admonition to heart:

**“But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless”** (Titus 3:9).

This is not to say that discussions on the Scriptures, tempered by love and a degree of fair-mindedness, should be excluded from discourse. But, when disagreements move people away from the unity in the Messiah that the Father wants for His body of Believers, then everyone who is in Yeshua should be determining where the problem of division is originating. After all, at the

conclusion of the Last Supper, the final exhortation of Yeshua to His Disciples, summarized what the Father's and Yeshua's hearts are for those called to be redeemed children:

"I am no longer in the world; and *yet* they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, *the name* which You have given Me, **that they may be one even as We *are***. While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled. But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil *one*. **They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world**. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. **I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, *are* in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, **so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them**" (John 17:11-26).**

These profound words from Yeshua speak to the key ingredient of love and unity, that will be a testimony to the world that the Father has indeed sent His only Son to be the sacrifice for the sin of humanity. But note in these comments, that the son of perdition (Judas Iscariot, an obvious tare) was not at the conclusion of the supper, and that Yeshua noted that His Disciples (wheat) like Him, "are not of this world." The wheat of the righteous is very different from the tares of the unrighteous—and yet, as stated earlier, both will continue to grow until the final harvest.

Now this is where it gets rather difficult, because it is not always readily discernible whether someone growing up beside you is also wheat or simply a tare, who might even mentally or intellectually think that he or she is wheat. This is additionally perplexing because as relatively innocent sheep, the propensity is for most Believers to essentially place their attributes upon others who claim to be sheep (wheat). Consequently, when it comes to understanding spiritual matters, there is the general, innate assumption that those talking

about such topics have the same basic comprehension. This sadly is not always the case, because as the Apostle Paul explains to the Believers in Corinth, a natural human being cannot receive the things of the Spirit:

“For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? **Even so the *thoughts* of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.** 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 spiritual *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 2:10-16).

If you apply this understanding to the analogy of the wheat and the tares, what essentially exists, throughout the fields of humanity around the world, are a groups of spiritually appraised (born again) people, interspersed with a number of natural minded people—who for the most part all appear to be the same from the naked eye, but with the eyes of the Spirit are not all the same. However, in God’s infinite wisdom, He commingles everyone, not only to reach the perishing, but to refine those who are already born from above. In most Messiah-oriented “religious” circles, there will be a higher percentage of wheat, because the Father is gathering them and they are coming together to acknowledge Yeshua as Savior. Lamentably, there is usually going to be a little leaven, as Paul puts it, in every lump of dough (2 Corinthians 2:11; Ephesians 6:11). For His Divine purposes, the Father allows this to occur, because His ways and thoughts are beyond our comprehension (Isaiah 55:8-9). Somehow in His mysterious ways, through even the leaven in the assembly, He is working all things out for good, for those who love Him and are called according to His purposes (Romans 8:28).

Nevertheless, upon considering some of the implications of the basic parable of the wheat and the tares, then some of the other advice using aspects of the natural order make even more sense. Take, for example, the simple admonition by Yeshua to be as shrewd as serpents but be as gentle as doves, and note the reason for the advice:

“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves” (Matthew 10:16).

Yeshua knew that His Disciples were going to be like sheep in the midst of wolves, and needed the shrewdness of a snake or reptile, in order to combat what the demonically influenced were doing or going to do to them. Being innocent as doves, spoke to the need to be willing to become a living sacrifice for those who were going to inevitably persecute you and even put you to

death, including your own family members:

**“But beware of men, for they will hand you over to *the* courts and scourge you in their synagogues; and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say. For it is not you who speak, but *it is* the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved”** (Matthew 10:17-22).

It is difficult to believe that another family member or friend you grew up with in the same environment, spoke the same language, heard the same teachings, made perhaps the same claims to religious or spiritually inclined institutions—would actually get to the point of turning you over to die for your beliefs. But sadly, this has been, is currently, and will in the future, be the destiny of much of the wheat—*and* who are placing their attributes upon the tares with whom they associate and perhaps even fellowship. Instead, the wheat should discern the ongoing fruit of the tares, and understand that they are *not* truly born from above and spiritually capable of comprehending what the Spirit of the Almighty truly teaches the redeemed.

Perhaps this is why Paul, in his closing comments of 1 Thessalonians, gave the Believers some sound advice about how to conduct their lives and deal with one another, given the challenges they must have been enduring in attempting to share the good news and contend with many challenges in their ancient environment:

**“Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.** But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. We urge you, brethren, **admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.** See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. **Rejoice always; pray without ceasing;** in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Messiah Yeshua. Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. **But examine everything *carefully*;** hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil. Now **may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete,** without blame at the coming of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah” (1 Thessalonians 5:11-23).

The concept of “praying without ceasing” makes much more sense when one considers that he or she has been embedded into a field of wheat and tares, regardless of the amount of tares in any given milieu. In the desire to be

led by the Spirit (Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:18) and walk in the Spirit (Romans 8:4; Galatians 5:16, 25), it is highly recommended by the Apostle Paul that one maintain communion with the Spirit of God through constantly praying, asking, seeking, and knocking (Matthew 7:7-8) for the Lord's will on various circumstances that arise throughout the day. This would include how to lovingly admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, patiently work with everyone, and not repay evil for evil. While rejoicing always to give thanks and not quench the Spirit, or even to despise prophetic utterances, everything is to be examined carefully through the grid of the indwelling Spirit of God. In so doing, by holding fast to what is good and abstaining from every form of evil, the result is to be sanctified in your spirit, soul, and body, and be made whole or complete in the Messiah. Believers are to be prepared as a stalk of wheat to be full of edible and nutritious grain, which is bowing before the Father in anticipation of the ultimate harvest.

To be gathered into His barns for eternity, to dwell in the presence of the Messiah, to have fought the good fight, to have loved our enemies, to have completed all of the good works foreordained for each of us to walk in, and to be welcomed with a “well done, good and faithful servant” rather than “I never knew you”—are available to all who call upon His name and cling to Yeshua, who offers the forgiveness of sin and eternal life.

In many regards, life and its challenges can be better understood through parabolic teachings that take some of the common, ordinary aspects of the natural order, to explain deep spiritual concepts. But just intellectually grasping what is being said does not necessarily always equate to the absolute requirement completed in the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34), which fulfills the required circumcision of the heart by God (Deuteronomy 30:6), where an unredeemed heart of stone becomes a redeemed heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36:25-27) indwelt by the power of the Holy Spirit. While the blessings of the gospel are awesome to comprehend and embrace, they must always be remembered by those blessed to be “wheat” to pray for the salvation of the deceived among us—especially in light of some of the “tares” who have been allowed into the Messianic camp.

In sober, concise terms, the author of Hebrews, in referring to Jeremiah's words, reminds Messiah followers about the problem of “sinning willfully” after receiving the knowledge of the truth:

“And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, ‘THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM,’ *He then says*, ‘AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE’ [Jeremiah 31:33-34]. Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer *any* offering for sin. Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Yeshua, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since *we have* a great priest over the house of God, let us draw

near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*, and all the more as you see the day drawing near. For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES [Isaiah 26:11]. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on *the testimony* of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, 'VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY.' And again, 'THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE' [Deuteronomy 32:35; 32:36; Psalm 135:14]. It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:15-31).

Considering this passage of Scripture in light of the parable of the wheat and the tares is tough, because it is so difficult to discern at times whether the rotten fruit resulting from some of the teaching in the Messianic community is simply from poor scholarship, immaturity, lack of training, or whether it is from other sources. So without reservation, the need to love and pray without ceasing for discernment and those responsible for the teaching becomes imperative. As it is said, love conquers a multitude of sins (James 5:20), and according to the concluding words of the Epistle of Jude, the beloved are to have mercy on those who doubt or are dangerously close to the unquenchable fire, in sharing the love of the Messiah with all in our midst:

"But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, that they were saying to you, 'In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts.' These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah to eternal life. And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh. Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Yeshua the Messiah our Lord, *be* glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen" (Jude 1:17-25).

May the Father's wheat bear good fruit, while advancing His Kingdom on Earth as it is in Heaven, until the restoration of all things...

# TNN ONLINE EDITOR'S UPDATE

April 2013

Dear Friends:



*What should I say regarding what happened in the past month or so?*

First of all, I was able to return to Florida for a family wedding in Jacksonville, which I enjoyed immensely. Not only was it good to get away for a few days, doing *literally nothing* while many others were on Spring Break, but I got to reconnect with family members I had not seen for a number of years. I was also able to visit with my 94-year old grandmother, Mary Ruth, who even with her Alzheimer's, still recognizes who I am, and still asks if I will ever get married... Alas, while visiting Grandmother was important...as she will inevitably not wake up from a future nap...it was most especially important during this excursion to return back to our previous family home in Kissimmee, and retrieve those few final pieces of furniture which did not make it in the two trucks driven out to Dallas in November and December. Suffice it to say, having driven by the old house, we all have definite "closure" on the Florida chapter of our lives.

Looking at the future, I can say that we definitely made the right decision to move back to North Texas. By this point in April, the presumed "honeymoon period" is pretty much over. The dream, which we had been anticipating for well over two years, has become a reality. Now, there are those important family and ministry goals which we desire to see reached, which only time and nature taking its course, can see achieved. Instead of us moving to the Northeast, or the Baltimore-Washington area, or Southern California—we have moved to a significant hub of North American Messianic activity. We are still trying to figure out some things for sure, and we will doubtlessly feel more at home in our surroundings after a full year or so—but we definitely made the right move for both our family and ministry!

Looking at what happened in the Messianic world, particularly during the month of March, has been a bit perplexing. Several months before March 2013, there was a significant amount of end-time speculation and date-setting, associated with what "might happen" in Israel and on the Temple Mount. Much of this reminds me of the failed predictions one teacher made sixteen years ago, where he actually predicted that the Abomination of Desolation would occur on March 23, 1997. *That is actually the equivalent of two Tribulation periods, plus two years, ago.* March has obviously come and gone, and we are not in the final moments of the Last Days, and those teachers who predicted things to take place are predictively silent now. While we should definitely be aware of events

occurring in and around the Land of Israel, we should not let such events get us derailed from the daily and weekly work of the Kingdom of God. Hopefully some people learned a few things about being sensationalized by end-time predictions.

As I frequently have said, there are many areas, both theological and spiritual, in which today's Messianic movement needs to begin to demonstrate some significant maturity. Within the past month, the amount of "Easter bashing" which I saw evidenced on Facebook, for example, far outweighed the amount of *Passover emphasis and enrichment* which should have been present. Various people thought it far more appropriate to harp on various Christian limitations regarding the Easter bunny and Easter eggs, unfairly condemning them, and taking things beyond reasonable reevaluation—than emphasizing instead their negligence to actually examine the Holy Scriptures and see what they had overlooked regarding the Passover lamb and sacrifice of Yeshua. Much of the unfair approach toward Easter vs. Passover had been stirred by various populist voices—but most critically has been caused by a spiritual ideology which tends to emphasize differences among God's people first, rather than common faith in the Lord first. *This has been the cause of many unnecessary fights between Christians and Messianic people, as well as many internal Messianic divisions.* While we do not encourage today's Believers to commemorate Easter Sunday, we are greatly appreciative of those of you who have tried to cut through much of the sensationalism out there, and who can focus the attention of all brothers and sisters onto many of the weightier matters of salvation, grace, and holiness. (See the *Messianic Spring Holiday Helper* for some further thoughts.)

By this time, many of you have seen the announcement that went out, regarding the unfair and negative review posted of *Galatians for the Practical Messianic* on Amazon.com, by a Christian person who basically thought that all Messianics, in whatever sector, were evil. As a part of our ongoing Theological Defense Trust, TNN Press has spearheaded a definite drive to make sure that a wide amount of favorable reviews for our various publications, have been posted to Amazon.com. We are particularly keen in seeing a total of **thirty reviews** posted for *The New Testament Validates Torah*. Assisting us with this will not only help with letting others know how many of you have been genuinely and truly blessed by our materials—but it is also important as it will give us a higher ranking, among other, well known Messianic books. Please post your review of a TNN Press title today (a short paragraph will be just fine), as it is an easy, free way, to help our ongoing efforts at Outreach Israel Ministries and TNN Online!

Until next month...

J.K. McKee

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