



# OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

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DECEMBER 2009

WHY WE SHOULD CELEBRATE  
CHANUKAH

A compass rose is visible in the top left corner. The background features the words 'OUTREACH ISRAEL' and 'NEWS' in large, stylized letters, with 'NEWS' being significantly larger. Below these words, the words 'REACH', 'TEACH', 'ENCOURAGE', and 'DISCIPLE' are arranged horizontally. The background also has some faint, large letters like 'S', 'W', 'E', 'N' and some numbers like '08304050' and '0304050'.

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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 people 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

December 2009

This month's issue of OIM News will be the final edition of this publication for the first decade of the Twenty-First Century. Rather than looking back at some of the challenges mentioned in last month's lengthy article, "Our Messianic Future," we will be looking ahead to this month's celebration of *Chanukah* and the good things in store for the coming decade. Our lead article this month is entitled, "**Why We Should Celebrate Chanukah**," by J.K. McKee, and should really inspire you in terms of the significance of this holiday. For well over ten years, our family has witnessed how the Messianic community typically has some difficulties during the Winter holiday season. Many people do not know what to do in the month of December between Christmas, *Chanukah*, and the New Year. This short article has been reproduced from the new paperback edition of the *Messianic Winter Holiday Helper*—which has been put together precisely to offer you and your family some important direction on how to make this a blessed season of the year, and not something that you dread.

With a new decade on the immediate horizon and some challenging family circumstances still present, I was prompted to write a McHuey Blog post this month, entitled, "**Walking Ancient Paths in Modern Times**." I have considered the concept of maintaining our ministry position as part of the ongoing "conversation" in the Messianic world, and beyond to the larger Jewish and Christian world. While visiting relatives in November, I had some things placed upon my heart, as considerable time was spent with those *not even remotely involved* with spiritual pursuits. When talking with them, all I did was really discuss more temporal topics that revolved around new and emerging technologies—which I am now beginning to understand! Hopefully, some of the aspirations expressed in this briefing will materialize, as our ministry continues to utilize the efficiencies of modern technology, which are expanding exponentially without any sign of slowing down.

We are continuing to move forward with the TNN Press Book Printing project. By year's end we should have *Torah In the Balance, Volume I* back from the printers. *Colossians and Philemon for the Practical Messianic* is going to the printers this month, and *TorahScope, Volume I* is being readied for submission in January. Ideally, we would really like to see twelve new paperback titles produced in 2010, so that within a relatively short period of time, the **quantity** of the paperback versions of our books will catch up with the **quality** that has already helped so many seekers. We know from the feedback we have received that people are being blessed, especially as more Christian bookstores are searching for Messianic books that explain the Hebraic Roots of our faith in a very uplifting and constructive way.

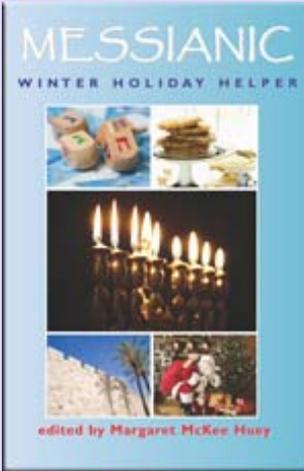
Your continued financial support of our efforts is greatly appreciated! We cannot accomplish our goals without your partnership for not only our printing endeavors, but also our general fund. Your generosity to our ministry is most

important this time of year, as we not only look forward to next year's goals, but as we can be encouraged by your gratefulness toward our work!

May the Lord richly bless you this month! *Chag Sameach Chanukah!*

Until the restoration of all things...

William Mark Huey



# MESSIANIC

## WINTER HOLIDAY HELPER

paperback edition

The Winter holiday season is frequently a conflicted time of year for many people in today's Messianic movement. On the one hand, most Messianic Believers do not celebrate the holiday of Christmas on December 25, due to some of its pre-Christian origins and questionable traditions. On the other hand, the birth of Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus

Christ) is a Biblical event which we all must acknowledge in some way. Furthermore, during this same Winter season, the Jewish community commemorates the Festival of Dedication or *Chanukah*. What is a Messianic Believer to do?

The *Messianic Winter Holiday Helper* is a valuable compilation of resources designed to assist you, your family, and your Messianic fellowship for this season. We have included a selection of articles summarizing the holiday of Christmas, and how Messianic Believers need to have a proper attitude toward our Christian brothers and sisters. We have included a variety of teachings on *Chanukah*, common traditions associated with it, and how this can be a blessed time of spiritually rededicating ourselves to God and to each other. Information on the time period of the Maccabees in Second Century B.C.E. Judea, the wars that they fought, and the long term impact they left on subsequent generations, has been provided. A few FAQs on the Winter holidays are offered, as are some delicious recipes, and liturgy you can recite for your *Chanukah* celebration.

Do not let the Winter holiday season be a difficult time for you any more. The *Messianic Winter Holiday Helper* can assist you greatly in making this a very special time for you and your family!

Available now! \$16.99 (shipping to be added)

# WHY WE SHOULD CELEBRATE CHANUKAH

by J.K. McKee

*Chanukah* is my favorite of all the holidays we get to celebrate as Messianic Believers. Why is it my favorite, you may ask? It does normally take place in December, which means it is in close proximity to my birthday. In December, I get to open a lot of presents! As a Messianic Bible teacher, *Chanukah* has the least amount of controversy associated with it, which means I get to relax (somewhat). We all know when *Chanukah* begins, the twenty-fifth of Chislev (2 Maccabees 1:18; 10:5), so there's no dispute about when it takes place. The traditions associated with *Chanukah* are fairly straightforward: light your *menorah* for eight days, on Day 1 lighting one candle, Day 2 lighting two candles, etc. Be sure to eat fried foods like latkes or doughnuts, remembering the miracle of the oil remaining lit. **Probably the biggest fight I've ever seen among people who celebrate *Chanukah* is over the menu!** Not too bad if you ask me.

Believe me, as one who often has to moderate disputes among Messianics during either the Passover season, or the time period from *Rosh HaShanah* to *Sukkot*—*Chanukah* is easy in comparison. But that does not mean that there are no questions that people ask. Generally speaking, I think those of us of the Jewish traditionalist camp in terms of Torah observance and *halachah* have often not explained ourselves as well as we should. (Please note that this does not mean that we are all “Orthodox.”) Because of this, there are some who scratch their heads and wonder whether we should really celebrate *Chanukah*. Isn't this just “the Jewish Christmas”? While the traditionalist perspective has longevity, and brings a great deal of stability to the faithful, we do need to ask whether the custom of celebrating *Chanukah* passes the test of Philipians 4:8:

“Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.”

I think we will all agree that the Holy Scriptures pass the test of being holy, pure, excellent, and worthy of our attention and praise. Suffice it to say, *Chanukah* or the Feast of Dedication is mentioned in the Holy Scriptures, where John 10:23-24 speaks of Yeshua being present in Jerusalem:

“At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem; it was winter, and Yeshua was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon.”

For some, such as myself, it does not seem that difficult. Our Messiah Yeshua was present when *Chanukah* was being celebrated at the Temple complex in Jerusalem. There had to have been some kind of festivities going on, where the actions of the Maccabees in cleansing the Temple a century-and-a-half earlier were commemorated. The attention in the verses following is not spent discussing whatever celebration was going on, but instead considers the opportunity that Yeshua had to teach and demonstrate who He was as Savior (John 10:25-42). There are some critical statements made here about Yeshua's oneness with the

Father and His Divinity (John 10:30, 33), worthy of exploration in other studies. Yet for some, Yeshua's presence at the porch of Solomon does not automatically mean that He celebrated—or would even endorse—the celebration of *Chanukah* today.

I agree, along with many other Messianics, that Yeshua observed all of the appointed times of Leviticus 23. But are you aware of the fact that there is no direct statement in the Apostolic Scriptures which says that the Messiah kept *Yom Teruah/Rosh HaShanah*? I haven't found it... (at least not yet). This does not mean that the Lord did not observe the Feast of Trumpets, but we actually have more direct evidence as seen in John 10:23-24 that the Lord observed *Chanukah*. I have heard some Messianic skeptics say that while Yeshua was present at the porch of Solomon, He was away from the Temple, as though He were standing off to the side disapproving of the celebration of *Chanukah*. However, F.F. Bruce's remarks in his commentary on the Gospel of John are more true to what is stated in the text:

"Jesus evidently had spent the two months since Tabernacles in or near Jerusalem... The note that 'it was winter' may be intended to explain why he was in a covered part of the temple precincts. Solomon's colonnade was the name given to the portico which ran along the east side of the outer court of Herod's temple."<sup>1</sup>

Yeshua's presence at the porch of Solomon is not difficult to deduce: **it was Winter when *Chanukah* was being celebrated.** There could have been cold winds, freezing rain, or maybe even snow. This was, in all likelihood, where many of the people were gathered to see what was going on for the memorial of the Feast of Dedication. If any of us live in Winter climates today, would we not be expected to celebrate *Chanukah* in some kind of an enclosed, or at least a covered, area? We would want to be shielded from the harsh elements.

I sincerely hope that during the *Chanukah* season, every one of you has taken the time to peruse through the Books of Maccabees. This is easy for me, because I have four study Bibles on my desk that include the Apocrypha, and even a copy of the Septuagint which includes the Greek source text used for today's English translations. As one who writes commentaries, I have to engage with literature like Maccabees on a semi-frequent basis, as verses may be referred to in the more technical commentaries that I consult in my studies. Maccabees is often considered to be martyr literature, as the Jews during the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and the Seleucid invasion had to resist assimilation and the occupation of their country. Many were tortured and killed for their faith in the God of Israel—before Yeshua even came on the scene. There is a Biblical reference to these martyrs in Hebrews 11:36:

"Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection" (NRSV).

The story of the seven brothers in 2 Maccabees 7 is something that you all need to read, if you have never read it. The second brother, before being murdered, tells his captors, "You accursed wretch, you dismiss us from this present life, but the King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life, because we have died for his laws" (2 Maccabees 7:9). David A. deSilva concurs,

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<sup>1</sup> F.F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 230.

“Those who were tortured’ but who maintained their loyalty to God and trust in his reward of the faithful are frequently and rightly identified as the martyrs who suffered under Antiochus IV, whose story is vividly preserved in 2 Maccabees 6:18-7:42 and 4 Maccabees 5-18... That the author of Hebrews should include among his examples of faith this group of martyrs is not at all surprising...”<sup>2</sup>

Honoring those who give their lives in the service of God is something very appropriate during the season of *Chanukah*. When the Apostle Paul went out into the Mediterranean and faced unwarranted arrest, imprisonment, beatings, and abuse—do you at all think that he considered the example of the Maccabean martyrs who had preceded him? Does the celebration of *Chanukah* pass his test in Philippians 4:8?

Some would say no. Some would say that the Maccabees were murderers who preyed upon Antiochus’ troops and disloyal Jews, killing innocent people in cold blood. But in all honesty, if the traditions and customs of your people were based in the Torah, what else would you do when you saw gross idolatry, abominations, and collaboration with the enemy around every corner? You would stand up, fight, and resist—purging the sin and the idolaters from your midst—the exact same thing happened when the Ancient Israelites were in the wilderness. Mattathias, the father of Judah Maccabee, is testified to being of the same character as Phinehas:

“Thus he burned with zeal for the law, as Phinehas did against Zimri the son of Salu. Then Mattathias cried out in the city with a loud voice, saying: ‘Let every one who is zealous for the law and supports the covenant come out with me!’” (1 Maccabees 2:26-27; cf. Numbers 26:7-8).

Some are still not convinced that honoring the Maccabees is a good thing, because some of their descendants conspired with Rome and helped set up a Hasmonean dynasty that led to the kingship of Herod, an Edomite. Yet, the celebration of *Chanukah* is not to honor those who came two to three generations *after* the cleansing of the Temple. Messianics still celebrate the Passover, even though only two adults from the Exodus generation actually made it into the Promised Land! And likewise, are the godly achievements of Joshua nullified because things get grossly out of control in the Book of Judges after he died?

One of the problems that some skeptics have about *Chanukah* pertains to the miracle of the oil remaining lit for eight days. It is true that it is not mentioned in the historical accounts of 1-4 Maccabees, and instead appears in the Talmud (b.*Shabbat* 21b). Does this mean that it was a totally fabricated legend and that most Jews and Messianic Jews, and people such as myself, are promoting mythology? One of the advantages of reading the Scriptures in their ancient context is that you actually get to compare the Bible against the religious stories of others. You get to see what real mythology is. Some would say that Balaam’s donkey speaking to him is obviously mythological (Numbers 22:28-30). Some would say that the whole Old Testament, especially things like Noah’s Flood (for which there are competing stories in the Ancient Near East), is obviously mythological. But there are some major differences between mythology and the way that the

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<sup>2</sup> David A. deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle “to the Hebrews”* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 419.

Scriptures are presented. K.A. Kitchen explains,

"[The patriarchal narratives] are entirely concerned with a purely human family whose lifestyle is firmly tied to the everyday realities of herding livestock (pasture, wells), yearning for children, arranging suitable marriages, and so on. We never read (for example) of animals divided up that magically rejoin and live again, or of a patriarch's path barred by blocks of lapis or gold. Rather, bearing strictly real, human names, the patriarchs move in well-defined, specific locations...and not in some vague, never-never land. By their names and characters, the patriarchs are a group of distinguishable individuals, neither ghosts nor stereotypes."<sup>3</sup>

When one compares many of the accounts of the Tanach to extant religious literature from the Ancient Near East, one compares concrete people living real lives to kings and monarchies that consort with the gods (perhaps even sexually). The contrast is so great between such mythology and the Bible that I do not know even where to begin.<sup>4</sup>

**A candelabra of olive oil remaining lit for eight days is not an impossible miracle to believe in**—even if it is mentioned in the Talmud! We all believe in the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah, do we not? Is that not the greatest miracle of them all? If we believe in Yeshua's resurrection, and we do not consider it mythology, why would we deny God the possibility of leaving the Temple *menorah* lit for eight days while new oil was being consecrated? Oh, do people have problems with it because it is mentioned in the Talmud and we do not trust *any* of the religious literature of the Jews? What does that say about a Messianic movement whose shared faith heritage originates from both the Church *and* the Synagogue? Whatever happened to the Jewish people having the oracles of God (Romans 3:2)?

Certainly there have been abuses by some Messianics during the *Chanukah* season. Much of this comes from a lack of understanding, and a lack of information. Not enough attention is given to the Maccabees' story and what they faced and endured, or people do not understand the historical complexities of the era of Hellenism and specifics of Greek religion and philosophy. Some people go overboard with presents and with eating (*and* with drinking), and not enough time is spent focusing on the very serious and very sober theme of martyrdom. **Being killed in the service of God is never a popular theme at any time of year.** Yet, such a theme should be emphasized as it binds us together with men and women of God all throughout the Biblical story, through the millennia since the original Feast of Dedication, and today as millions of Believers in the third world suffer under the threat of tyrannical regimes, not knowing if they will live another day.

*Chanukah* should be celebrated because it has important themes of salvation history that cannot be taken for granted, when God works through His people to accomplish His deliverance. Had the Maccabees not purged the idolatry from Ancient Judea, we may not be having this discussion today. The Jewish people would have been eliminated via cultural assimilation.

<sup>3</sup> K.A. Kitchen, *The Bible In Its World: The Bible & Archaeology Today* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1977), 64.

<sup>4</sup> Consult the article "Encountering Mythology: A Case Study from the Flood Narratives" by J.K. McKee for a further discussion.

The Maccabees sacrificed their lives for the gospel before Yeshua was even born. While I will not justify much of the unfair criticism of Christmas by today's Messianics, *Chanukah* should not be summarily dismissed in extreme response to such criticism. It is a holiday where we all—whether Jewish or not—benefit from the actions of the Maccabees. It is a commemoration where we honor their sacrifice—but now as Messianics we can remember them as some of the forgotten members of the Hebrews II Hall of Faith.

What can you tell me about the Feast of Dedication being celebrated in place of *Sukkot* by the Maccabees when they rededicated the Temple?

When the Seleucid Greek invaders occupied the Land of Israel, it was forbidden for any of the Biblical holidays to be celebrated, possibly under the threat of death. Obviously, this would have included *Sukkot* or the Feast of Tabernacles. Many Jews continued to celebrate the appointed times in secret, or in some limited way without being caught.

Some in the independent Messianic community, who largely frown on observing *Chanukah*, say that when the Maccabees rededicated the Second Temple that the eight-day festival they celebrated was Tabernacles, which they were unable to celebrate prior to this time. They base it on statements made in 2 Maccabees 10:5-6:

“It happened that on the same day on which the sanctuary had been profaned by the foreigners, the purification of the sanctuary took place, that is, on the twenty-fifth day of the same month, which was Chislev. And they celebrated it for eight days with rejoicing, in the manner of the feast of booths, remembering how not long before, during the feast of booths, they had been wandering in the mountains and caves like wild animals.”

The REB actually says “they recalled how, only a short time before, they had kept that feast while living like wild animals in the mountains and caves.” Did the Maccabees actually try to “keep *Sukkot*” while evading the Seleucid armies in the wilderness? We might never have an answer to this question. But what we do know is that while there were various elements and themes of *Sukkot* brought into the first Festival of Dedication, it was celebrated and mandated as its own unique holiday. The text continues, clarifying what the Jews assembled in Jerusalem were actually doing:

“Therefore bearing ivy-wreathed wands and beautiful branches and also fronds of palm, they offered hymns of thanksgiving to him who had given success to the purifying of his own holy place. They decreed by public ordinance and vote that the whole nation of the Jews should observe these days

FAQ??

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every year" (2 Maccabees 10:7-8).

We are told that this new holiday, commemorating the rededication of the Temple, was "decreed by public edict, ratified by vote, that the whole nation of the Jews should observe these days every year" (NRSV). This makes *Chanukah* something new and unique that was not intended to be a substitute for *Sukkot*, even though *Sukkot* may have served as a template for much of it to be based upon.

### **Should I attend Christmas dinner with my extended family?**

Many of today's Messianic Believers, who once celebrated Christmas, still have to interact with their Christian family during the Winter holiday season. The Spring holiday season is admittedly much easier, because Easter does not have the same kind of commercialism associated with it as Christmas, and many churches today hold some kind of Passover *sedar* meal. It is much easier to tell Christian family, who are familiar with the Passover *sedar* to some degree, that you remember Yeshua's resurrection in conjunction with your Messianic congregation's Passover remembrance.

How you answer your family's request as to what Messianics do to remember Yeshua's birth is not as easy, not only because there is no agreement in today's Messianic community as to what is to be done, but even more so because of the significant commercialism during this time of year. Christmas parties are held throughout the month of December, and traditionally extended family does get together for some kind of Christmas dinner. It is easy for Messianics who do not live close to extended Christian family to say that it will be difficult to attend Christmas dinner, but this is not everyone.

Too frequently, our ministry has heard stories of Messianics who will write mean-spirited letters to Christian family, telling them not to send them any Christmas presents or invite them to Christmas dinner as they "are not pagans anymore." This implies to extended family, who are God-fearing Christians who love Jesus, that they really do not know the Lord. The damage that this has done, and the bad reputation this has given our faith community, is **immense**. A person can always choose his or her friends, but a person can never choose his or her family. When you face the most difficult seasons in your life such as when a member of your immediate family dies, or when you are facing severe financial problems, your extended family will often be there to help, whereas your friends may not. You have the responsibility to always have good relations with your extended family, beyond the Fifth Commandment's requirement to honor father and mother (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16).

So when the month of December comes, should you turn down an invitation to Christmas dinner? *Only you can decide this for yourself*. Some will an-

swer “No!” But some will attend. They will recognize that this might be the only time of year to see all of their extended family, especially those who are aging and who may not live long. Many of us just recognize Christmas dinner as yet another meal, and will keep our comments regarding “Christmas” to “Did you have a good holiday?” **Some of us desire good relations with our extended family.** And, in demonstrating a degree of good will to them, we actually find it appropriate to invite them into our homes during one of the nights of *Chanukah*—even if it might be under the “guise” that we will be eating some rather tasty fried foods!

### **When should Messianic Believers remember Yeshua’s birth?**

Almost all authorities are agreed that Yeshua the Messiah was not born on December 25, and that the choice of December 25 for Christmas was an arbitrary date in ancient history, giving former pagans an opportunity to remember something different than what they had previously observed. Today’s Messianics, recognizing the questionable origins and traditions associated with Christmas on December 25, will still often recognize that the birth of Yeshua, as principally recorded in Luke 2, is still an event worthy of remembering. But when should it be done? What would be a date or season that is much more appropriate for us considering the entry of the Messiah into the world at Bethlehem?

Many of today’s Messianic Believers are of the conviction that Yeshua the Messiah was born in conjunction with the Feast of Tabernacles. This is primarily based on passages such as John 1:14, which speak of how “the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.” The Greek verb *skēnoō* (σκηνώω) is employed in this verse, with its noun form *skēnē* (σκηνή) frequently used in the Torah (i.e., Leviticus 23:34, 42-43) to render the Hebrew *sukkah* (סוכָּה). YLT actually renders John 1:14 with “the Word became flesh, and did tabernacle among us.” It is not at all inappropriate to connect the typology of *Sukkot* to the Incarnation of Yeshua. Yet, just like with those ancient Christian leaders who arbitrarily chose December 25 to remember Yeshua’s birth, so might concluding that Yeshua was born during the Feast of Tabernacles also be a bit arbitrary. There is simply no way for us to know for certain.

It is sad, though, that those who are of the opinion that Yeshua might have been born during Tabernacles, have usually been met with varying degrees of resistance when they have tried to integrate this into their *Sukkot* festivities. Attacks along the lines of “We should not be remembering anyone’s birth!” are usually issued. The actual, Biblical record of Yeshua’s birth can be literally ripped to shreds. A few contentious people who will without hesitation claim that “Christmas is pagan!” now want nothing to do with what the Gospels tell us about the birth of the King of Kings, and prefer to

excise it from their Bibles. So to avoid controversy and encourage unity during the *Sukkot* season, those who believe that Yeshua was born during this time often never bring it up, and keep their thoughts to themselves.

Certainly, it is justified to question the spiritual maturity (and even salvation) of those who will not even read passages like Luke 2 or Matthew 1-2 that detail the nativity, and what took place during the early years of Yeshua's life, yet claim Him as their Savior. **Anyone who has placed his or her trust in Yeshua still has to deal with the Biblical text.** Disregarding it completely, as though it does not exist or that it is too "Churchy" for us to consider—even when not celebrating Christmas—is sad evidence of how a few of today's Messianics are utter neophytes when it comes to reading Scriptures about Yeshua's life and ministry.

Not all are convinced that Yeshua was born during the season of *Sukkot*, or are at least skeptical of this proposal and think it needs more research. Yet, it is clear that because the birth of Yeshua is a part not only of Scripture—but also our faith—that we should find *a time* to consider what its message means for us. Aside from celebrating Christmas, or trying to remember the nativity during the Feast of Tabernacles, **it might be that the "safest" time to address the birth of Yeshua is when *Shemot* (Exodus 1:1-6:1) appears in the yearly Torah cycle.** What makes this an appropriate time to consider the message of Yeshua's birth, is that parallels between the birth of Moses and the birth of the Messiah—who came as a "second Moses"—can be considered.

Of course, even if we choose to examine the birth of Yeshua when *Shemot* appears in the Torah cycle, there will still be those few who will oppose it, because they have adopted a very immature and ungodly attitude toward Christmas and their Christian brethren. Unfortunately, there is nothing that can really be done with this kind of people, other than to ask them whether they think the Biblical account of Yeshua's birth should be removed from the Holy Scriptures. And if they actually say yes—then we should wonder whether or not 2 John 7 applies concerning such people:

"For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Yeshua the Messiah *as* coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antimessiah."

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# Walking Ancient Paths in Modern Times

by Mark Huey

In recent months, due to life circumstances and numerous intimate interactions with family and friends—attempting to put words to the inevitable reality of human mortality—the conflicting contrast of worldviews was impossible to avoid. For the great majority of these conversations, I remained relatively silent about my eternal perspective, because quite frankly, the words of Paul to the Corinthians often came to mind. Most of the people I have been interacting with view life from an entirely secular and/or natural mindset:



“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 2:12-16).

Knowing that some of my family, and most of their loving friends, were primarily *natural people*—rather than cast forth pearls of spiritual wisdom that would be unappreciated—I have been relegated to listening to vain philosophies about: the cosmos, a Hindu philosopher named Rumi, reincarnation, and annihilation after death. However, when given just a glimmer of light into the hearts and souls of these sincerely caring people, I was quick and firm to declare the resurrection hope that is within me! Of course, where those words fell (the soil of the heart according to Matthew 13), and whether they were planting seeds or watering previously sown seeds, are entirely up to our Heavenly Father and His work of redemption and salvation.

Upon returning home and reflecting on these conversations in early December, the thought of an “anachronistic dilemma,” communicating a return to the mores, precepts, and instructions of the Scriptures, came to mind. Immediately, the thought of encouraging people to walk according to the ancient paths in modern times, became one challenge that Messianic Believers need to address as we move forward toward the consummation of this age. After all, if the restoration of all things (Acts 3:19-21), as foretold by the prophets of old, is real and is not a clever muse to reformulate things in your mind or a myth to motivate inane actions—then our efforts to encourage a return to the ancient ways **will not be in vain**. The arc of history will bend back toward the beginning of time and the Creator will restore order to His creation, albeit with some traumatic episodes preceding the return of the Messiah Yeshua.

With our firm belief that the Lord Almighty is actively conducting the restoration process, and that He is calling forth a generation of souls to prepare the way for His eventual return, is unending. With the advent and advancement of modern technology, the exacerbating distractions that tug on hardened hearts, seem to proliferate daily. Knowing this, our ministry has determined that rather than be relegated to the sidelines of societal debate, left in the dustbin of history as the world carries on discussions regarding present circumstances and future challenges, we are **going to “enter into the conversation” by using some of the very technologies available to present the message of hope for God’s Kingdom to come.**

Of course, engaging in “the conversation” occurs on multiple levels. Naturally, there is a chattering that occurs on any number of subjects that are of interest to a great variety of individuals. We note in the United States, for example, that a media generated drone on politics, business, entertainment, sports, weather, and any number of subjects generates voluminous interest. Just look at the different Internet websites that provide fodder for public consumption,

and you can readily discern what the majority of people want to know about in order to be conversant in coffee break discussions, or when engaging someone in a dialogue. Common ground for exchange breaks the ice!

But what about conversations that are beyond this temporal realm? What about eternal and spiritual subjects that have meaning beyond this mortal life? Where do we find those who are willing to venture into these realms, with convictions that delineate solid Biblical research and understanding? Where are those voices who can really contribute to the prophesied restoration of all things, rather than detract from it?

In our ministry experience for over seven years, we have not always appreciated how some voices have defined not only the Messianic movement or lifestyle, but also how it seems that *we somehow* have to follow their lead and agree with them. This is not too dissimilar from the media reinterpreting conversations or telling stories with their personal biases and presuppositions. **Some of the "bigger" Messianic voices out there do not represent us. We represent us,** and we prefer to let people know our thoughts and conclusions without any prejudiced filters. This is why both Outreach Israel and TNN Online send out many e-mail teachings every week, and consistent exhortations and Bible studies. In some regards, we are following the example of President Ronald Reagan, who used the television press conference, White House Rose Garden speech, or Oval Office communiqué—to speak directly to the American people—without others repackaging his words for their own purposes.

Our society has become much more technologically savvy with things like Facebook, YouTube, and the evitable MP3 podcast. Our ministry itself has made use of a variety of these tools, and as new venues are made available, we will certainly consider them. This past month I just got a new Apple iPhone, and in learning how to use it, I saw how easy it would be for our MP3 teachings to be made available via iTunes. One of our outreach projects for 2010 will be to make our audio teachings available on iTunes (almost five years worth at present), in an effort to get our point of view out there to the masses!

We can see how the Prophet Daniel actually saw much of this coming, from visions he received while in Babylonian exile. Just read about some of what he witnessed as he had a peek into the future:

"Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands *guard* over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace *and* everlasting contempt. 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 12:1-4).

What is exciting to consider when one analyzes Daniel's vision, is that while he notes a great time of distress and judgment, as well as a future resurrection of people—most important to be considered is how "Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever" (NIV). Daniel observed an increase of knowledge, which many conclude is the advent of the Computer and Information Age, involving the ability to transfer and expand knowledge around the globe at ever increasing speed and efficiency. The communication tools available to us today can certainly be employed not just by the enemy to put out deceptive and enticing words—but also by Believers to help them proclaim the good news of salvation in the Messiah Yeshua.

Only God Himself knows the exact time of fulfillment of Daniel's, and other similar prophecies. Because *we* do not know the exact time, we have to be busy about the work of His coming Kingdom, of which we are already citizens (Philippians 3:20). How we can do this as Messianic Believers is very important to consider, because according to Revelation 12:17, 14:12, the end-time saints will not only trust in Yeshua's atoning work for salvation, but they will also be keeping God's commandments. Having a more comprehensive understanding of what God's

commandments are, and how obeying them pleases Him, is something that today's Messianic movement has been uniquely positioned to help instruct people with.

For these purposes, as long as the Holy One allows us to continue, our ministry efforts will be devoted to efficiently get the messages of salvation, redemption, and restoration to all who have the ears to hear. It is a joy to know that despite the challenges of bringing His message to a world that is largely lost—it is still and will always remain the Lord's work to not only soften the hearts—but cause the increase. As one who has always taken great comfort in the sovereignty of God, I am always amazed about what He is able to do!

Finally, looking back on the history of Ancient Israel, we find that our task is not too different from that which figures like the Prophets themselves once had to perform. Consider what a man like Jeremiah had to face, when confronted with how the great majority of the population he appealed to was not very hungry to walk in the ways of the Lord. Despite his many warnings about the judgment to come upon the Southern Kingdom, he appealed to the people to stand by the ways of the Lord and asked them to return to the ancient paths as originally laid out by Moses. These words could very easily apply to our modern society as well, as we must return to a foundational grounding in all the Scriptures:

“To whom shall I speak and give warning they may hear? Behold, their ears are closed and they cannot listen. Behold, the word of the LORD has become a reproach to them; they have no delight in it. But I am full of the wrath of the LORD; I am weary with holding *it* in. Pour *it* out on the children in the street and on the gathering of young men together; for both husband and wife shall be taken, the aged and the very old. Their houses shall be turned over to others, their fields and their wives together; for I will stretch out My hand against the inhabitants of the land,’ declares the LORD. ‘For from the least of them even to the greatest of them, everyone is greedy for gain, and from the prophet even to the priest everyone deals falsely. They have healed the brokenness of My people superficially, saying, “Peace, peace,” but there is no peace. Were they ashamed because of the abomination they have done? They were not even ashamed at all; they did not even know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; at the time that I punish them, they shall be cast down,’ says the LORD. Thus says the LORD, ‘Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; and you will find rest for your souls. But they said, ‘We will not walk *in it*.’ And I set watchmen over you, *saying*, ‘Listen to the sound of the trumpet!’ But they said, ‘We will not listen.’ Therefore hear, O nations, and know, O congregation, what is among them. Hear, O earth: behold, I am bringing disaster on this people, the fruit of their plans, because they have not listened to My words, and as for My law, they have rejected it also” (Jeremiah 6:10-19).

Lamentably, reading through the words of Jeremiah, one must be also reminded of some words given by the author of Hebrews, who states that: “**Yeshua the Messiah is the same yesterday and today and forever**” (Hebrews 13:8). The Lord is faithful to send people like Jeremiah to warn of impending judgment, so that sinners and those in rebellion toward Him will be warned. He also loves so that He will give righteous figures like Daniel visions, which are meant to encourage His people down through the generations so that they might know that not all hope is lost.

Too frequently, though, as Yeshua reminds us, human hearts can sometimes be so hardened to things of God, that not only will they not listen to the Scriptures—but if they could, they would not even listen to people who could come back from the dead (cf. Luke 16:31-32). We are all going to encounter people in life who do not want to listen to the Bible, and they certainly do not want to heed the claims of the Risen Savior who conquered death. *At one point or another, we have all met them and have interacted with them.* For some reason, no matter what we share or the good works they see in us (cf. Matthew 5:16), some people are just not ready to humble themselves and cry out for mercy—perhaps until it is too late.

We are called to keep on with the work of God's Kingdom, regardless of how many accept or reject the message. If for us it is to share more about the ancient paths using as many of the modern technologies as possible—then we simply say: Hallelujah! **May our efforts bear fruit and may you join us in these endeavors of faith!**

# JOIN THE TNN PRESS BOOK FUND

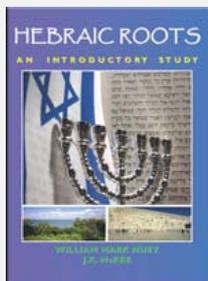


Would you like to see high quality, scholastic, and loving Messianic books like *The New Testament Validates Torah* or the *Messianic Sabbath Helper* available from major booksellers? Do you want your friends to be able to purchase these books without the “fear” of having to contact a Messianic ministry? Join the ongoing **TNN Press Book Fund** today and make this a reality!

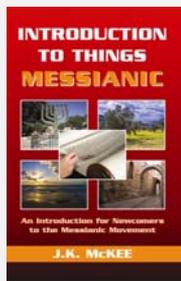
The TNN Press Book Fund is the most ambitious project ever embarked upon by our ministry. For over five years, we have been on the cutting edge preparing materials for the long-term future of the Messianic movement, ranging from introductory books to home study guides to commentaries on various books of the Bible. These publications *now* need to be able to have a wider distribution than *just* our ministry. They need to be out there to counterbalance some of the unfair and unloving materials that bring discredit to the Messianic community. They need to promote a Messianic movement that is going to be an influence of positive change in the world. TNN Press offers some of the most well-researched and theologically stable Messianic materials on the market, and it is time to see that our publications are professionally printed.

*Hebraic Roots: An Introductory Study, Introduction to Things Messianic, the Messianic Fall Holiday Helper, When Will the Messiah Return?, and the Messianic Winter Holiday Helper* are now available in paperback!

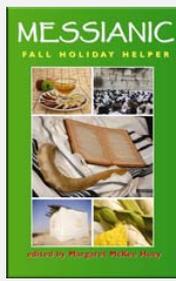
*Torah In the Balance, Volume I* is currently at the printers, and the new commentary *Colossians and Philemon for the Practical Messianic* is being readied.



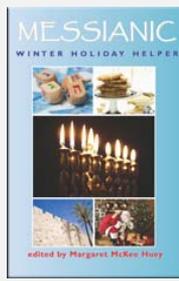
AVAILABLE



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# KOSHER YOUR PLATE

*edited by Margaret McKee Huey*

It is my intention to bring our Messianic readers several timely recipes of interest in each issue of the OIM News. In this issue, I have included some special recipes for Chanukah that can come straight from your Kosher Pantry!

## Easy Chicken Casserole

2 cups cooked pasta (ziti, penne, or macaroni)  
1 can (12 oz) white meat chicken (drained)  
2 cups shredded cheese (Muenster, Cheddar, or Asiago)  
1 can (10 oz) condensed cream of chicken soup  
1 soup can of water  
salt and pepper to taste  
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Cook pasta according to directions on package and drain. Combine all ingredients except Parmesan cheese and spoon into a greased 2 quart casserole dish. Top with Parmesan cheese and bake in a preheated oven at 350 degrees for 30 minutes when it is hot and bubbly. Serves 6

## Easy Cherry Dump Cake

2 cans tart cherries (drain one can)  
1 box yellow cake mix  
1 stick melted butter  
1 teaspoon almond extract

In a 9" x 12" pan, dump the cherries on the bottom and mix in the almond extract. Next, dump the dry cake mix on top of the cherries. Mix and blend all ingredients together. Drizzle butter on top on the cake mixture. Bake at 350 degrees for about 30 minutes until the top begins to brown. Wonderful treat!

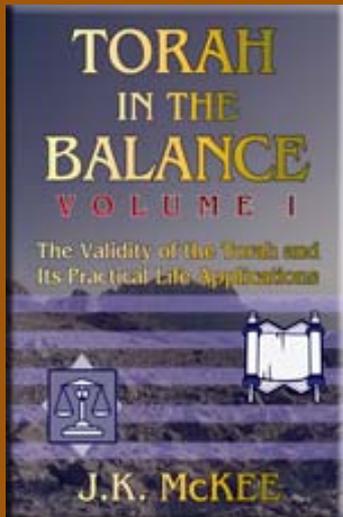
## Easy Applesauce

3 cans sliced apples  
1 cup water  
1 cup brown sugar  
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg  
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves

Heat apples and water until boiling then reduce heat. Stir in the rest of the ingredients and bring to a boil. Boil and stir apple mixture about 1 minute. Serve warm!

*These recipes are easy Pantry ready meals that can be made at any time, and are especially good for emergency situations.*

A new release coming from TNN Press:  
**TORAH IN THE BALANCE**  
VOLUME I



paperback edition ©2009

*Torah In the Balance, Volume I* is a well needed resource for our time, as it addresses the main aspects of how to follow God's Torah. Subjects addressed include: why Believers need the Torah, the Acts 15 Jerusalem Council, the foundational importance of the Ten Commandments, the role of the appointed times, and the dietary laws. While Messianic positions on these aspects of faith can often clash with those of our Christian brothers and sisters, they are considered in a fair and reasonable way that encourages *positive solutions* between all people who have called out to Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) for salvation. A large amount of scholastic engagement and support is offered for the validity of these aspects of faith on the part of today's Believers.

This book is an important addition to any Messianic library, and should be read by those desiring not only a comprehensive understanding regarding what the Lord has started in this hour—but the *great responsibility* we have been endowed by Him. With everything we have been called to do, **the transforming power of God's love** is emphasized above all! This resource encourages growth and maturity on the part of *all* of His people.

**\$21.95** (paperback) plus shipping & handling



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**FROM TNN PRESS!**