



OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

REACH TEACH ENCOURAGE DISCIPLE



DECEMBER 2011
CHANUKAH

and encountering worldly philosophies



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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.

Members of the Board:

Mark Huey
Margaret McKee Huey
Russ and Lynda Kroeker
Grant and Julie Richards
Mark and Lynn Davis
J.K. McKee

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OIM is a 501(c)(3) non-profit
educational ministry

Mark Huey
director

Margaret McKee Huey
office manager

J.K. McKee
TNN Press

Jane McKee and Maggie McKee-Huey
youth ministries

Outreach Israel Ministries
1492 Regal Court
Kissimmee, FL 34744

Phone: (407) 933-2002
Fax: (407) 870-8986
Web: www.outreachisrael.net
www.tnnonline.net
E-mail: info@outreachisrael.net

OIM UPDATE

December 2011

Another calendar year is coming to a close, which always gives Outreach Israel Ministries and TNN Online a significant opportunity to reflect upon what the Lord has accomplished through us during the past year. Each year we establish some specific goals and objectives, and make our plans accordingly, but as we are also reminded, it is always up to the Lord to direct our steps: “**The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps**” (Proverbs 16:9).

This past year has been a bit different than some previous years, because our family plan to sell our house and move back to Texas has just not come together yet as we had anticipated. Some of this is related to the bad real estate market in Florida—and we are not going to just “give” the house “away”—although more is probably related to various health issues with Margaret’s mother and my parents, which would significantly add to the stress of relocating and being reestablished in a new community, if we had moved yet. Please be praying for my mother, Jean Huey, who will be having open heart surgery on January 05! She will have a triple bi-pass, and her two valves will be replaced. *We are all very concerned* that the procedure goes well, and that she has a full recovery.

Even with some future plans yet to materialize, the daily and weekly work that we have conducted during the past year has been quite important, for what we are anticipating to be a significant time of growth and expansion in 2012. In 2011 we started a (1) Prison Outreach Ministry, (2) a Facebook “like” page, and (3) we started to make TNN Press books available in eBook format through Amazon Kindle. In 2012, these three things, and some others yet to be announced, will surely be able to mature.

We are already seeing the fruit of our efforts, as many prisoners and those who minister to them, are increasingly asking for more and more of our written materials. We are, of course, most obliged and generous with what we can freely provide. The Facebook page (facebook.com/outreachisraelministries) continues to get bigger with more and more “likes,” as our posts and updates are acquainting us with people from all walks of life scattered around the globe, who we would have most likely not known about any other way. And, in the past month, given some significant changes which have occurred to the publishing industry only in the past year or so, TNN Press announced the release of eBook editions of some of our major titles for Amazon Kindle, which can be read on a Kindle device, or via the Kindle application for your PC or Mac, iPad, or iPhone. (Be aware that you do not have to own a Kindle to read Kindle books.) Our *Messianic Winter Holiday Helper* is available in both paperback and eBook format today, to aid you with some of your potential challenges during this time of year.

We want to thank each and every one of you, for all of your prayers and generous support of our efforts to serve the Messianic community of faith! We really do strive hard to provide you with loving, balanced, and well researched teachings and new publications throughout the year. We end 2011 with a sense of fulfillment, and look forward to 2012 with a sense of deep encouragement and anticipation!

Chag Sameach!

Mark Huey

CHANUKAH

and encountering worldly philosophies

by J.K. McKee

One of the responsibilities of any Bible teacher is to bridge the gulf that exists between Scripture passages given in an ancient historical context, and providing practical application for those living in the Twenty-First Century. Human nature often remains the same between an ancient period and modern society: people still commit sin, people still need redemption, people still desire to be loved. Certainly as Messianic Believers, we learn and encounter many things that teach us about ourselves from the weekly Torah portions, from the Tanach, and from looking at the Apostolic Scriptures in their ancient Jewish and Mediterranean setting.

Making a connection between the *Chanukah* story and society today is actually quite easy, but it is also very complicated. I will not disagree with anyone who says that a main feature of the *Chanukah* story is resistance to Hellenism or errant Greek philosophy. But what we define as Hellenism or errant Greek philosophy is very much contingent on a teacher **actually knowing a few things about classical Greek philosophy**, and being able to provide documentation from primary and secondary sources when one defines a concept or idea as specifically being “Greek.” Again, it is easy for me to talk about this because in our Wednesday Night Bible Study,¹ when we encounter classical concepts that the Apostles are directly confronting—engagement with the relevant Greek or Roman philosophers, historians, or politicians is offered.² Yet for many who promote the concept of a so-called Hebrew mind versus a Greek mind, such engagement is often not provided. It should make one wonder if this soundbyte is often used to just be a smokescreen to promote some ear-tickling teaching (2 Timothy 4:3).

Whether you are aware of it or not, 1 Maccabees 1:44-50 actually gives us specific examples of the kind of Hellenism directly imposed upon the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes, and rightly opposed by the Maccabees:

“And the king sent letters by messengers to Jerusalem and the cities of Judah; he directed them to follow customs strange to the land, to forbid burnt offerings and sacrifices and drink offerings in the sanctuary, to profane sabbaths and feasts, to defile the sanctuary and the priests, to build altars and sacred precincts and shrines for idols, to sacrifice swine and unclean animals, and to leave their sons uncircumcised. They were to make themselves abominable by everything unclean and profane, so that they should forget the law and change all the ordinances. And whoever does not obey the command of the king shall die” (1 Maccabees 1:44-50).

The Hellenism that the Maccabees fought against included:

¹ MP3 audio lectures of our current studies are accessible online at <tnnonline.net/biblestudy>.

² For a strident example, note the comments under the subheading “The Greek View(s) of Immortality” in the article “To Be Absent From the Body” by J.K. McKee, which actually addresses the diverse views of the afterlife as held by the Ancient Greeks and Romans.

- Following the Greek religion, which included the worship of multiple gods and images, and making sacrifices to them with unclean and unfit animals
- A prohibition on animal sacrifices and prescribed offerings according to the Torah
- A prohibition on keeping the seventh-day Sabbath
- A prohibition on circumcision
- A prohibition on studying the Torah and its ordinances, so the people would forget their covenant status with the God of Israel

The “Hellenism” that was *not* fought against was learning, speaking, or using the language in which the Apostolic Scriptures or New Testament were inspired by the Holy Spirit.³ The Hellenism that was fought against was a way of life that would lead people away from the God of Israel and His Teaching.

I could explain to you many concepts that I feel are floating around today’s Messianic movement that have been passed off as being “Hebraic,” when in actuality they are Greek to their very core. One of the biggest and most severely overlooked problems originating from Hellenism regards how women are often treated by today’s Messianic movement, and what can often manifest itself as blatant chauvinism. Qualified women are not only frequently barred from positions of leadership and teaching,⁴ but wives are frequently unable to have a say in the home—things that run against Paul’s instruction in Ephesians 5:21-33 on mutual submission. The message of the equality that Yeshua has restored, not only among all people of all nationalities—but both genders—is not something that we really hear (Galatians 3:28).⁵

Chanukah is to be a time of rededicating ourselves to the Lord, and to one another as fellow brothers and sisters. Yet there is one concept that I would like us to consider, one that is very Hebraic as seen in the Torah, and one that seldom receives any attention from Messianic leaders or teachers: **the corporate identity of God’s people.**

In Deuteronomy 6:25, the Ancient Israelites declare, “It will be righteousness for us if we are careful to observe all this commandment before the LORD our God, just as He commanded us.” Many people read this verse and assume that if an individual keeps all of God’s commandments then that individual will be con-

³ I am fully aware of the fact that many of today’s Messianic Believers think that the whole of the Apostolic Scriptures were written in Hebrew. This is more of an opinion, though, rather than a fact. Such a view would need to be substantiated by specific book-by-book analysis, and also engagement with relevant scholastic research. No one I have ever encountered advocating a so-called “Hebrew New Testament” has ever really done this.

For a further discussion of this subject consult the publication *Scripture Under Scrutiny: Was the New Testament Really Written in Hebrew?* by TNN Press. Also see Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1990), and D.A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, second edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005).

⁴ Consult the FAQ on the TNN website, “Women in Ministry.”

⁵ For a further discussion, thoroughly substantiated with quotations from classical philosophy and Rabbinical sources, and how “the husband is the head of the wife” (Ephesians 5:23) speaks of him being the source or origin (Grk. *kephalē*, κεφαλή) of her (cf. Ephesians 5:28), consult the commentary *Ephesians for the Practical Messianic* by J.K. McKee. Also consult his paper on Galatians 3:28, “Biblical Equality and Today’s Messianic Movement.”

sidered righteous. Of course, there are no examples that individual Ancient Israelites ever did this, as human actions are considered “filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6, NIV) before God, and as soon as the Ancient Israelites entered into the Promised Land—idolatry largely prevailed (Book of Judges). The problem with this interpretation of Deuteronomy 6:25 is that it just assumes that individuals are in view. Whether you are aware of this or not, *tzedakah* (תְּדָקָה) has a corporate context that relates to one being a part of God’s people.⁶ What is likely being said in Deuteronomy 6:25 is that if one keeps God’s commandments he or she can be identified as being in covenant status before Him as a part of His people.

This kind of corporate identity is significantly foreign to a post-Enlightenment Western mind. How many of you have ever heard that there are places in the Bible when “righteousness” or “justification” is being talked about, where anything but individuals are probably in view? Various Christian theologians within the New Perspective of Paul (like James D.G. Dunn or N.T. Wright) have pointed out some possible places in Galatians and Romans where *dikaïosunē* (δικαιοσύνη), the Greek equivalent of *tzedakah* via the Septuagint, has corporate connotations.⁷ The reaction to their proposals have been met with a great deal of resistance among some evangelicals, as though they somehow deny the Biblical concept of justification by faith. All they have proposed, however, is that perhaps in a place like Romans 3:28, “For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law,” inclusion among God’s covenant people is the likely issue. Does this covenant inclusion come about via faith in God, or by “works of law” (whatever these “works of law” actually are)? This is a worthy topic of exploration for your Biblical studies.⁸

The problem is not that God is concerned with individuals; He surely is. Individual salvation is more important than any other concept we can emphasize! The problem comes when we over-emphasize the individual at the expense of the whole corporate Body of Messiah. Many of the divisions we have seen in Judaism, Christianity, and even the Messianic movement have largely come about because of an emphasis on hyper-individuality—a **direct result of our Western culture**. It is as simple as people not demonstrating enough concern for others, because when others’ needs are considered as being more important than your own (Philippians 2:3), then the Body of Messiah can truly flourish. Consider how most interpret Romans 12:1, versus what the issue really is within the larger scope of Paul’s letter:

“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which* is your spiritual service of worship.”

The NIV actually renders this as “offer your bodies as living sacrifices,” even though *thusian* (θυσίαν) appears in the singular, **not the plural**. While we are each to surely live our individual lives as a living sacrifice to God, in his teaching

⁶ Cf. Harold G. Stigers, “צְדָקָה (root),” in R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 2:752-755.

⁷ Consult the articles “The Message of Galatians” and “The Message of Romans” by J.K. McKee for more information on this.

⁸ For a further examination on how “works of law” likely related to ancient Jewish sectarian observances, consult the article “What Are ‘Works of the Law?’” by J.K. McKee.

to the Romans Paul is more concerned about stopping the divisions present among them.⁹ He wants them to understand, “we, who are many, are one body in Messiah, and individually members one of another” (Romans 12:5). The living sacrifice that Paul has in mind here is not exclusively one of individuals being living sacrifices—but of the corporate Body of Messiah, *which is made up of individuals*, functioning as a singular living sacrifice. Lives of self-sacrifice and mutual submission to one another within the corporate Body of Messiah are able to accomplish the mission of God much better than individuals off on their own.

Similar to this is how Paul instructed the Corinthians, “Do you not know that you are a temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16). And also, “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? (1 Corinthians 6:19). As important as it may be for us to individually think of ourselves as being a receptacle of the Holy Spirit, it is undeniable that *oidate* (οἶδατε), “know,” and *en humin* (ἐν ὑμῖν), “in you,” appearing in 1 Corinthians 3:16, are in the **plural**. Likewise, 1 Corinthians 6:19 has references to *to sōma humōn...en humin...echtete apo Theou, kai ouk este heautōn* (τὸ σῶμα ὑμῶν...ἐν ὑμῖν...ἔχετε ἀπὸ θεοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἐστὲ ἑαυτῶν)—“your body...in you...you have from God, and that you are not your own”—also with you in the **plural**. What does this all mean? It means that once again the corporate Body of Messiah is principally what is in view. Only by functioning together can we fully be a Temple of God’s presence that will attract others to Him.

I believe that if there is anything distinctly Western that our faith community suffers from, it is our inability to function with corporate unity. It will not be impossible for us to function with corporate unity in the future, but in order for this to be achieved we must have a more refined understanding of what God’s mission is for His people, what we need to be doing in order to achieve that mission, and how we can be men and women empowered by the Holy Spirit who live in mutual submission to one another. **And the biggest challenge of all is to actually have hearts and minds transformed by the Holy Spirit!** If we have hearts and minds transformed by the Holy Spirit, then every single one of us will have a burden for the lost, and we will be able to “be subject to one another in the fear of Messiah” (Ephesians 5:21).

As you confront worldly philosophies at this *Chanukah*, consider your relationship to other Believers and how you can contribute to us all being a pleasing *corporate* living sacrifice before Him! How are we to *all* function as His Temple, and not necessarily individual “temples”? Rededicate yourselves not only to the Father, but to your fellow brothers and sisters, and we will definitely go far!

⁹ About as close as I have ever seen a major commentator refer to this, are Douglas J. Moo’s remarks in his Romans commentary, in a footnote:

“The shift from the plural σώματα (‘bodies’) to the singular θυσίαν (‘sacrifice’) could indicate that Paul thinks of this presentation as having a corporate dimension, involving the service of the entire Christian community together” (*New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistle to the Romans* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], 750, fn #24).

Should I attend Christmas dinner with my extended family?

FAQ??
tnnonline.net/faq

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 *seder* meal. It is much easier to tell Christian family, who are familiar with the Passover *seder* 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 answer "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!

MESSIANICS

and the Nativity

by J.K. McKee

When the month of December arrives, many people across the broad Messianic movement do not know what to do. The Messianic relationship with the traditional holiday of Christmas, on December 25, is a complicated one. Our faith community has a great number of people, properly labeled as being “paganoid,” who will look through every nook and cranny of a Christmas custom, trying to find some kind of connection with ancient heathen revelry. Our faith community also has a great number of people who actively celebrate Christmas alongside of *Chanukah*, and who do not think that Jeremiah 10:1-5 has anything direct *or* indirect to do with Christmas trees. To them, the different symbols of Christmas have been redeemed from the Devil, and people should just “lighten up” a bit.

I have always tried to have a rather pragmatic view of the Christmas holiday, because I understand that for most truly born again, evangelical Christians who celebrate Christmas—*they* are remembering the birth of Jesus. Remembering the birth of the Messiah, focusing on Biblical passages like Luke ch. 2 that record God’s Incarnation as a human being, and singing songs praising this taking place—are hardly something that can be considered as “pagan.” Yet, seeing what Christmas has become—which for many people is about questionable traditions, commercialism, and about indulging oneself in gifts that might only get used once—I think it is also fair to say that **Christmas on December 25 was never God’s original intention for His people.**

This year, 2011, will mark twenty years since I have *truly* celebrated Christmas, because Christmas of 1991 was the last time I celebrated Christmas with my father. I certainly do have many blessed Christmas holiday memories in my past, but they all involve my late father. I grew up in the family home in Northern Kentucky, where it frequently snowed in December, and where we would often have a live pine tree (which would be planted in the yard after the Christmas holiday). We would go to church together, we would have Christmas dinner together, and there were those specific things that the McKees would do together, that only *we* could do. One was going to downtown Cincinnati, to CG&E and watch the electric trains. Another was going to place a wreath at the McKee family plot in Ft. Mitchell, where my grandparents are buried, paying our respects.

In the years following my father’s passing, my mother getting remarried, our family moving away, *and* our family becoming Messianic—Christmas was never the same for me. I do not mean this to sound too “morbid,” but in a way *Christmas for me died with my father*. Christmas is a part of my past life with him, which I am to truly cherish and contemplate with nostalgia, but it has not been a great part of my life since, and nor was it to be a part of my future as a Messianic Bible teacher. The approach that I have toward Christmas, and it being tied to honoring my father’s life and his impact on me, definitely keeps me from be-

ing disrespectful or rude to others who keep it. *It keeps me from trying to find so-called "paganism" in minute aspects of Christmas where there is none.*

At the same time, knowing that "life goes on" and things change, also keeps me from being overly-enthusiastic about Christmas time. I do not miss the Christmas tree, I do not miss getting a load of presents that will be quickly forgotten and/or thrown away, and I do think that many Christians who celebrate Christmas have a very plebian level of faith. For, while many know the Lord Jesus as Savior of the world, their understanding of Him as Yeshua the Messiah of Israel is significantly under-developed. Many Christians at this time of year, when singing about the baby born in Bethlehem, will only think of the Messiah as a small infant child (or even a figurine at that)—because of the many warm memories they have at Christmas time—and they will fail to consider Him as the Redeemer of Israel, who came to teach repentance, service toward the downtrodden, and be sacrificed for the sins of all of fallen humanity.

It is easy for us to consider some of the shortcomings of our Christian brethren as it surrounds the holiday of Christmas, the sheer occupation that many of them will have as they shop and decorate, and how there will be hundreds of dollars wasted on things that could be put to more productive use. *I do believe that today's Messianic Believers can set a better example,* because our commemoration of *Chanukah* tends to not be as elaborate or ornate as Christmas. One (modest) gift, for the eight nights of the Festival of Dedication, is a bit different than a whole slew of gifts on Christmas morning. Yet as I must sadly observe, there are still changes in Messianic attitudes that must take place. While there are some who have the same approach toward Christmas as I do, i.e., Christmas is a part of their personal past to be respected but not continued, there are those who go into schizophrenia, heart palpitations, and brain freezes at this time of year.

There is no better example for us to consider than the centerpiece of what sincere, evangelical Christians will be commemorating: **the birth of Jesus**. When you remove the Christmas holiday from the tree, the parties, and the gifts, there are still those many Christians who remember Christmas so that they can worship the Savior who was born in a stable in Bethlehem. Because to these many people, Christmas=the birth of the Messiah, I have been most steadfast in instructing Messianics over the years **to not call Christmas "pagan."** I have instead directed Messianics to refer to Christmas as being non-Biblical. The birth of the Messiah is surely a Biblical event, one which is documented for us in the Gospels. The commemoration of Christmas on December 25 is rooted within extremely suspect religious customs and traditions. Calling Christmas "pagan" can communicate to the uninformed Christian person that the Messiah's birth is something to be rejected, which it surely is not. What is to be rejected are trappings and customs which are hardly rooted in remembering the birth of Israel's Savior in Bethlehem. The Christmas tree certainly has nothing to do with First Century Judea, and far more to do with Medieval Germany.

What do today's Messianics do with the birth of Messiah, which at this season will be called the nativity? Once we have removed all of the Christmas traditions from our thoughts, and are sitting down with a passage of Scripture like

Luke 2 in front of us—which does speak of how “there were *some* shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night” (Luke 2:8)—what do we do? **Are you not aware of the fact that there are Messianic Believers, when reading about the Incarnation of the Son of God, who would just as well turn the page?** It is very sad to say, but even among those many Messianics who strive to be “fully Biblical,” as they say, they have little or no ability to simply read those parts of Matthew or Luke which describe the birth of Yeshua. In cutting Christmas out of their lives, they have gone further and have also excised an important part out of their regimen of examining Holy Scripture. Some say that Jewish people are to be remembered for their time of death, not their time of birth—but using this as some kind of an excuse not to read a section of canonical Scripture is unjustified. The Biblical writers thought it important enough to inform early Messiah followers something about the birth of the Savior.

Of course, many Messianics I know do want to be honest with what the Holy Scriptures tell us about the birth of the Messiah. They recognize it as a Biblical event worthy of study, and they even consider it something worthy of remembrance. Many, when seeing sentiments such as “the Word became flesh, and did tabernacle among us” (John 1:14, YLT), believe that the Messiah was born during the Feast of Tabernacles. There are Messianic Believers who commemorate Yeshua’s birth in association with the Festival of *Sukkot*, thinking that it is an ideal time to remember how God dwelt with humanity in human form. For some reason or another, though, the suggestion that Yeshua’s birth should be remembered during *Sukkot* has not seemed to have really caught on in large numbers. Perhaps it is because people think there might be a relapse into some Christmas traditions, and others have not been too convinced that Yeshua was actually born during *Sukkot*.

While there might be a typological connections between Yeshua being born and tabernacling with humanity at *Sukkot*, there are considerable typological connections to be made between Yeshua’s birth and one of the most important and well known Torah portions. Anyone who studies Christology, or the nature of the Messiah, is aware of the scores of parallels to be made between the birth narratives of Yeshua, King Herod’s pursuit and slaughter of the male infants—to the Torah portion *Shemot* (Exodus 1:1-6:1) which opens the Book of Exodus with the birth of Moses, the Pharaoh’s slaughter of Hebrew infants, and the expectation of deliverance. Yeshua the Messiah is to be regarded as a kind of Second Moses. If any of us hopes to better understand the different dynamics of Yeshua’s ministry, then we need to better understand the different aspects and events which took place in Moses’ life. (Last year, ironically enough, the Messianic community read the Torah portion *Shemot* on Christmas Day, December 25.)

When your Messianic congregation or fellowship goes to turn to the Torah in this annual cycle, reading Torah portion *Shemot*, contemplating what it communicates—what do you expect to see taught? Will there be some sort of snide comment made by your congregation’s teacher about all of the Christians who celebrate Christmas? Or, will there be some significant maturity seen? Yes, Mes-

sianic Believers do not *and should not* celebrate Christmas on December 25. At the same time, Messianic Believers *should never* deny or deride the birth of Yeshua the Messiah at Bethlehem—something which was directly paralleled and foreshadowed by the birth of Moses some thirteen centuries prior.

When you go to open the Torah this year for the reading of *Shemot*, what will you be doing? Will it force you to consider the events surrounding the birth of Yeshua as being connected to the events of the birth of Moses? Or, is the birth of Yeshua something that has been too closely tied to the Christmas season, and that addressing it as intelligent and mature Bible readers is something now to be regarded as impossible? Is the birth of Jesus too closely connected to the nativity scenes that you will see displayed right next to Santa Claus and his sleigh, for it to warrant some consideration by someone whose loyalty is to be to the Scriptures and what they record took place in past history?

The Messianic struggle with what to do during the Winter holiday season, and how to deal with the birth of Yeshua into the world, is not going away. *There are too many in our ranks who cannot deal with any aspect of it.* When it comes to the birth of Yeshua, this is not a matter of debate over the holiday of Christmas; it is a matter of reading God's Word, and what it communicates to us about the Messiah. The Messiah is the Second Moses, and His birth has typological connections to the birth of Moses. If we cannot open up the Torah, recognize the connections, and honestly discuss them as mature Believers—then we obviously have a way to go as God's people.

I know that for many of you, giving up Christmas on December 25 has been difficult. I also know that for many of you, the journey is not yet over, and there are some bad attitudes that need to be jettisoned. **Gauge where you currently stand, whenever you read the *Shemot* Torah portion.**



1&2 THESSALONIANS BIBLE STUDY COMING IN DECEMBER!

It is very easy for today's Messianic Believers to overlook the content of the Pauline Epistles, due to their complexities about issues pertaining to the Torah, First Century Judaism, and the inclusion of the nations in God's plan of salvation. Among all of the Pauline letters, however, 1&2 Thessalonians get almost *totally ignored* by contemporary Messianic readers. Yet, 1&2 Thessalonians were some of the earliest of Paul's letters written, depicting some of the early conflicts that the Body of Messiah experienced, as the good news was being proclaimed in the Mediterranean world. 1&2 Thessalonians are quoted in bits and pieces for their teachings on the end-times, the Second Coming, and they are surely employed in debates over a pre- or post-tribulational gathering of the saints. 1&2 Thessalonians includes *much more* to be examined, though, as the First Century Believers were caught in the middle of often being rejected by the Jewish Synagogue, and they were treated with great suspicion and hostility by Greeks and Romans.

What important lessons are there for us to learn from 1&2 Thessalonians?



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 one of our favorite meals for *Chanukah!*

Potato Latkes

5 large potatoes, peeled and cut up
1 onion
2 eggs, beaten
1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
3 tablespoons flour
Salt to taste

Chop potatoes in a food processor. Put in drainer and run cold water over them for 1 minute. Drain. Chop onion in processor and place in mixing bowl. Add all the other ingredients to onions and mix well. Heat ½ inch oil in a large frying pan over medium heat. Drop a tablespoon of batter into hot oil for each latke. Flatten and fry for 3 minutes on each side until they are brown and crisp.

Beef Sauerbraten

1 (4-5 lb) Beef Brisket
1 cup water
1 cup vinegar
1 sliced lemon
2 sliced onions
4 bay leaves
2 tsp. pickling spices
12 gingersnaps

Place meat in a crock-pot dish and add all the ingredients, except gingersnaps. Marinate meat for 2 days in your refrigerator, turning it several times. Next, cook the beef in a crock-pot on Low for 6 – 8 hours. When cooked, place the meat on a serving dish and keep it warm. Take the marinade and strain it. Then cook the marinade with the added gingersnaps on High for 15 minutes. Serve the Beef Sauerbraten with the gingersnap sauce over our potato latkes and with applesauce.

Chunky Applesauce

8 Cooking Apples, cut into fourths and peeled
1 cup water
1 cup brown sugar
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
¼ teaspoon ground cloves

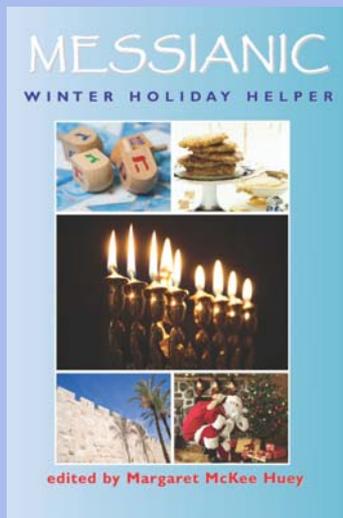
Heat apples and water until boiling then reduce heat. Simmer uncovered until the apples are tender. Stir them so they will break up into smaller chunks. Stir in the rest of the ingredients and bring to a boil. Boil and stir apple mixture about 1 minute. Serve warm!

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

Available from TNN Press:

MESSIANIC

WINTER HOLIDAY HELPER



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!

\$16.99 (paperback) U.S. shipping and handling included

\$9.99 (eBook) instant download for Amazon Kindle



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