



OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

REACH TEACH ENCOURAGE DISCIPLE



MARCH 2010
PERSEVERANCE *and* PASSOVER



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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

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OIM UPDATE

March 2010

Every year as Passover approaches, I am reminded of one more orbital circumnavigation around the sun as the day of my physical birth is commemorated (primarily by loved ones), and another year is added to my age. This year, the dreaded and what seemed decades ago to be the “antiquated” sixties—are on the visible horizon. Thankfully, by the grace of God, a good genetic makeup, and the blessings of a healthy diet and active lifestyle, the concept of “youth being wasted on the young” will *not* become my mantra! Instead, as the teeth get a little longer, and the hair somewhat thinner and whiter, the inspiration to persevere in the faith and be as strong and vigorous—as I was at forty—to (at least) eighty-five years of age has been established by one of my Biblical heroes, the faithful forerunner Caleb. Remember his request to Joshua as the Israelites began completing the occupation of the Promised Land:

“Now behold, the LORD has let me live, just as He spoke, **these forty-five years**, from the time that the LORD spoke this word to Moses, when Israel walked in the wilderness; **and now behold, I am eighty-five years old today. I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me; as my strength was then, so my strength is now, for war and for going out and coming in.** Now then, give me this hill country about which the LORD spoke on that day, for you heard on that day that Anakim *were* there, with great fortified cities; perhaps the LORD will be with me, and I will drive them out as the LORD has spoken.’ So Joshua blessed him and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance. Therefore, Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite until this day, because he followed the LORD God of Israel fully. Now the name of Hebron was formerly Kiriath-arba; *for Arba* was the greatest man among the Anakim. Then the land had rest from war” (Joshua 14:10-15).

Caleb was a faithful and patient man who trusted in the Lord from the forty days of spying out the Promised Land, through the forty year desert sojourn of Israel, until the first years of the Conquest. He was not bashful about his request to take on the giant Anakim, who were fortified in the area around Hebron, adjacent to where the Patriarchs were buried at the caves of Machpelah. Caleb’s absolute reliance upon the Lord is seen, as he declares, “You yourself heard then that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but, the LORD helping me, I will drive them out just as he said” (Joshua 14:12, NIV). **Caleb was not presumptuous** about his ability to conquer the Anakim, and placed the final results of his desire to reside in the hill country in the providential will of the Almighty.

I consider this to be a superb example, for all who trust in the Holy One of Israel, to emulate. I find it encouraging, because Caleb continued to trust in the Lord even as a “senior”—being a great role model we should all strive to follow after. After all, when spiritual accomplishments are noted, it is not how long you live or how physically strong you are as you age, but rather **how you have perse-**

vered during your life journey in order to expand God's Kingdom (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:11). It appears that Caleb had the physical strength to defeat the Anakim in warfare, but it was Caleb's perseverance and mature understanding—in that he needed to be *totally dependent* upon God for victory in all seasons of his life—that should be most instructional to those of us reading about him today. During his life Caleb was used to accomplish God's will for Israel in occupying the Promised Land and in establishing itself as a new nation. No doubt by his actions, Caleb closely adhered to a personal creed that embodied some aspects of what would later be seen in the Lord's Prayer, as it closes with the words, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

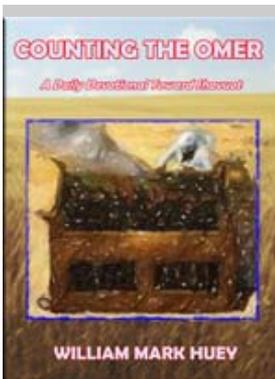
In contemplating the natural aging process this past month, while reminiscing about Caleb—and subsequently being reminded of each Believer's desire to be useful in the work of the Kingdom—I was prompted to write an article that addresses the subject of perseverance in light of our upcoming remembrance of Passover. The lead article for this issue of OIM News, "**Perseverance and Passover,**" is written to exhort you to seek spiritual growth in your individual walk with the Lord, as you join with your Messianic congregation and fellowship—getting together and remembering the themes of the Exodus and of Yeshua's sacrifice for us.

In order to assist you in your celebration of the Spring feasts of the Lord, we have just released our significantly expanded *Messianic Spring Holiday Helper* (now three times as large at 352 pages!), along with our *Haggadah for Messianic Believers*. These are now available for immediate shipping. Additionally, my reflection books *Counting the Omer* and *Sayings of the Fathers* are both useful tools that you can employ for counting the fifty days between Unleavened Bread and *Shavuot*. We trust these teachings and exhortations will benefit you, your family, and your Messianic fellowship as you seek Him for His blessings during this special time of year.

Finally, our TNN Press Book Printing Project continues. *This will be the most rigorous year in getting new titles released.* Your ongoing ability to support our endeavors has been greatly appreciated, but we need your continued help!

Until the restoration of all things...

William Mark Huey



COUNTING THE OMER

Have you ever considered the command of Leviticus 23:15-16 to Count the Omer, and wondered how this applies in the modern era? Have you ever wondered how this decree could be more meaningful and fulfilling in your Messianic walk of faith? What critical lessons can be learned in the time between the festivals of Passover and *Shavuot*?

If you can identify with these questions, then *Counting the Omer: A Daily Devotional Toward Shavuot* is just the book for you!

PERSEVERANCE and PASSOVER

by Mark Huey

For all Messianic Believers, the arrival of the Spring feasts is a very special time of year. The reinforcement of one's beliefs by historical practices established millennia ago—commencing at Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and extending through the fifty-day Omer Count to *Shavuot*—enables Jewish and non-Jewish Believers to focus on the Lord in some rather unique and enriching ways. In a timely manner, most Messianics are involved in some kind of weekly study of the Torah, along with various ancillary passages in the Tanakh and the Apostolic Scriptures, which amplify the foundational accounts about Ancient Israel's deliverance from the bondage of slavery in Egypt. One's yearly study through the Book of Exodus culminates later in the annual remembrance of the Passover, at both home and congregational *seder* meals.

How important is the Exodus to people of faith? Every year around the world, people in the Jewish, Messianic Jewish, independent Messianic, and even much of the evangelical Christian world—reflect on the significance of the Exodus storyline. From the point of oppressive bondage under the Egyptian taskmasters, to a miraculous deliverance under the leadership of Moses and Aaron, to the forty year struggle during the desert sojourn as murmurings contrast with the embracing of a covenant with the Creator, to the precipice of entering the Promised Land—much of the history of Ancient Israel's life history is remembered or referred to. The timelessness of this story has influenced Western civilization for over 3,300 years—as many people since the days of Moses have willfully chosen to find a source of identity in the Torah. Both Jews and Christians, in their own unique and significant ways, have tried to live out the imperative of being a kingdom of priests and a holy nation:

““Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, **then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.**” These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.’ So Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the LORD had commanded him. All the people answered together and said, ‘All that the LORD has spoken we will do!’ And Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD” (Exodus 19:5-8; cf. 1 Peter 2:9).

While reflecting on this anticipated season, and how people all over the Earth will be either remembering the Passover *seder*, or at least having to hear about the Passover—the concept of a link between the annual commemoration of the Passover, and the required perseverance of the saints came to mind. The realization that God, in His infinite wisdom, commanded His people to remember these historical events for all future generations, indicates that He knows how the human tendency is to often wander away from forgetting His past acts of salvation. Of course, a chapter like Leviticus 23 goes into great detail about the

various appointed times that the Lord wants His people to remember—but one really sees some significant places in the Book of Deuteronomy on how He wants His children to **remember** the Passover, and all of the events surrounding the Exodus and what it took to get Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land:

- **“You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to observe the sabbath day”** (Deuteronomy 5:15).
- **“If you should say in your heart, ‘These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?’ you shall not be afraid of them; you shall well remember what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt”** (Deuteronomy 7:17-18).
- **“You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not”** (Deuteronomy 8:2).
- **“Remember, do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness; from the day that you left the land of Egypt until you arrived at this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD”** (Deuteronomy 9:7).
- **“You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this today”** (Deuteronomy 15:15).
- **“You shall not eat leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat with it unleavened bread, the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), so that you may remember all the days of your life the day when you came out of the land of Egypt”** (Deuteronomy 16:3).
- **“You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and you shall be careful to observe these statutes”** (Deuteronomy 16:12).
- **“Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam on the way as you came out of Egypt”** (Deuteronomy 24:9).
- **“But you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and that the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore I am commanding you to do this thing”** (Deuteronomy 24:18).
- **“You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I am commanding you to do this thing.”** (Deuteronomy 24:22).

I could tally up a list of Tanakh passages many pages long, if we were to do a search on the Hebrew verb *zakar* (זָכַר), “remember,” and how important it is to the Biblical narrative. Suffice it to say, God is very concerned that His people **remember** not only where they have come from—but most importantly where they are going—as His representatives among the nations of the Earth. Persever-

ance is critical to maintaining this role, in both remaining faithful to God and accomplishing His mission of being a light and conduit of His goodness:

“Thus says God the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and its offspring, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it, **‘I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, and I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon and those who dwell in darkness from the prison.** I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven images. Behold, the former things have come to pass, now I declare new things; before they spring forth I proclaim *them* to you” (Isaiah 42:5-9).

During His ministry, Yeshua the Messiah took Isaiah’s admonition of being a light to its ultimate level (cf. Luke 2:32), in actually being *the Light* Himself. Yeshua the Messiah and His Disciples remembered the Passover prior to His betrayal and crucifixion (Mark 14; Matthew 26; Luke 22), as the Lord would not only serve to be the Passover Lamb sacrificed for sins, but also be perceived as a kind of second Moses conducting a kind of second Exodus. Some of the conversation that occurred during the Last Supper, recorded in John chs. 13-18, includes some of the most memorable Gospel quotations that are cherished by all Believers, notably including, “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

By remembering the Passover, followers of the God of Israel get to tangibly demonstrate that they are persevering in His call requiring His people to be a light to the nations. Every year, in obeying His instructions, they get to remember what transpired in Ancient Israel’s deliverance from Egypt—and for Believers in Messiah Yeshua, how He has now secured us final redemption via His sacrifice. The Apostle Paul wrote the Corinthians on how the themes of the Exodus are to teach Believers of the story of God’s salvation, but also how the example of Ancient Israel’s complaining in the wilderness is clearly one to be avoided:

“I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Messiah. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness. Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, ‘THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND STOOD UP TO PLAY’ [Exodus 32:6]. Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. **Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall” (1 Corinthians 10:1-12).**

Paul is clear to describe how the account of the Passover and Exodus, re-

corded in the Torah, has been “written down as warnings for us” (1 Corinthians 10:11, NIV). If one does not remember the Passover, then will one learn the lessons that God wants us to understand? Later in his letter to the Romans, Paul specifies how the Tanakh Scriptures were not only written for the instruction and education of God’s people, but that they might also give them encouragement to persevere through any trials that might come upon them:

“Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not *just* please ourselves. Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. For even Messiah did not please Himself; but as it is written, ‘THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED YOU FELL ON ME’ [Psalm 69:9]. **For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.** Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Messiah Yeshua, so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah” (Romans 15:1-6).

In encouraging Timothy, one of his most trusted ministry companions, Paul listed perseverance among the most significant godly attributes that he was to demonstrate. There would be some false teachings circulating in Ephesus where Paul had left Timothy, and he would need to be encouraged to stand fast in the fight of faith:

“If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness...But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, **perseverance, and gentleness.** Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses” (1 Timothy 6:3, 11-12).

The Apostle Peter also made a link between perseverance and godliness, in how disciples of the Messiah through diligence, will never stumble:

“For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. Now for this very reason also, **applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.** For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah. For he who lacks these *qualities* is blind *or* short-sighted, having forgotten *his* purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Yeshua the Messiah will be abundantly supplied to you”(2 Peter 1:4-11).

Simply remembering the Passover and Exodus, and holding some kind of *seder* gathering with your family and close friends, is by no means enough to attain eternal life. *Eternal life only comes through Yeshua’s sacrifice as the Passover*

Lamb. But, we can surely learn about the redemption that we possess, and the events that have brought us deliverance, by remembering the Passover. As we remember the Passover every year, through a diligent pursuit of the Holy One and His ways, His people will be able to be enhanced in their relationship and service toward Him. *Remembering the Passover should cause us to appreciate—that much more—what Yeshua has done for us!*

Passover is undoubtedly a time when we remember the trials and tribulations of the Israelites in slavery to Egypt. We remember the difficult times of the Israelites' journey in the wilderness. And, we probably also remember some of the trials of others who have preceded us in faith. James the Just, half-brother of Yeshua, eloquently wrote about how the trials and tribulations of life are to be overcome by the enduring perseverance of the faithful:

“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, *being* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position; and the rich man *is to glory* in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away. **Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him”** (James 1:2-12).

No one wants to be classified as a “double-minded” or “indecisive” (HCSB) person, who claims to be a follower of the Messiah, but who downplays the significance of something as important as the Passover. Even many of today's evangelical Christians, who will not necessarily be attending a Passover *seder* this year, are still going to hear some kind of sermon on the connections between the Passover lamb being killed and how Jesus was slain for their sins. Messianic Believers have been uniquely positioned to demonstrate the blessings that are incurred, by people honoring the Passover, and in so doing consider *in a very special and profound way* what the Messiah has done for us. Jews who have faithfully remembered the Passover get to witness us remembering it, and Christians who have heard about the Passover get to witness us remembering it. **Always be prepared to answer their questions** in a way that testifies to the salvation you possess in Him!

Every year during this season, Messianic Believers have the great opportunity, both individually and corporately, to remember the Passover. When we attend our home or congregational *seder*, we get to reflect on important lessons that are to encourage us to persevere in the challenges of life—be those challenges spiritual or material. We are to remember the Father's faithfulness toward us, and pass on the message of such faithfulness to our progeny. We get to ex-

perience the joy of obeying Him, and the blessings of what obedience naturally brings.

I would submit that a connection between persevering and the Passover is something that is noted (at least in passing) by the Apostle John in the Book of Revelation. In a vision of the future generations, John saw a company of Believers who could be labeled “the persevering tribulation saints”: “**Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Yeshua**” (Revelation 14:12). While it is impossible to know if the current generation is going to be in the “Great Tribulation,” it is obvious to many Messianics that we are at least fulfilling the requirements of knowing the Messiah Yeshua as our Lord and Savior, *and* seeking to consciously keep the commandments of God. This is a blessing that most want to pass down to their children, something that is definitely accomplished when young people are encouraged to participate in the Passover. So, *make sure that they play some role in your seder meal—more than just being attendees!*

I pray that each of us would gain some new insights this year, as we remember the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread! We can draw closer to the Lord during the fifty-day Counting of the Omer to *Shavuot*, knowing how the anticipation built in ancient times toward the giving of the Torah *and* the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit! I know that if you remain faithful in your pursuit of the Holy One, you will be blessed—and the perseverance you will develop in your walk will be with you throughout the rest of your life!

Until the restoration of all things...



PASTORAL EPISTLES BIBLE STUDY COMING IN MARCH

Unlike some of the other letters of the Pauline corpus, there has been no significant demand for a detailed, Messianic examination of the Pastoral Epistles of 1&2 Timothy and Titus. Many of today's Messianic teachers and leaders think that they already know what these letters mean, and so putting out the effort of analyzing them beyond a cursory reading or survey is thought to probably not be needed. Sadly, today's broad Messianic movement is largely unaware and uninformed of a literal factory of academic proposals and perspectives, from over the past fifty years, regarding 1&2 Timothy and Titus. Much of this scholarship has affected various trends present in evangelical Christianity, the clergy of the contemporary church, and the debate over complimentarianism and egalitarianism. It is time for our faith community to join into these discussions.

This lengthy study of the Pastoral Epistles will take into consideration much of what has been offered by various scholars, not only in terms of the ancient setting of 1&2 Timothy and Titus, but also with how these epistles should be accurately applied in a modern setting. It will be our intention, as we probe these letters, to weigh our Messianic strengths and weaknesses of them, in an effort to be a faith community that is no longer lacking an adequate understanding. What are the things that we have actually interpreted correctly from the Pastoral Epistles, and what needs to be improved upon? How might some Messianic congregations and fellowships look if we took a good, hard look at 1&2 Timothy and Titus, and made a few required changes?

Be sure to be subscribed to our e-mail updates to receive this study!



“Everyone is Wrong But Me!”

by J.K. McKee

reproduced from 21 April, 2008



Passover is one of the most important times of year for the Messianic community of faith. The season of Passover and Unleavened Bread is so affluent with themes of God's salvation history it absolutely overwhelms the mind and inspires the soul. The Lord's plagues upon Egypt, the death of the firstborn, the Passover lamb, the deliverance through the Red Sea, and the onset of the Ancient Israelites sojourn in the desert immediately stir the senses and motivate us to action. The final time before Yeshua's crucifixion, His Last Supper, His prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane, His trial before the Jewish religious leaders, His encounter before Pilate and being beaten by the Romans, and finally His crucifixion and resurrection, are also remembered by the faithful as we contemplate the sufferings of our Lord. What all these things mean, how they connect together, and the significant role they play in the Bible and for us today—are really beyond comprehension.

Why does it seem that today's Messianic community in the early Twenty-First Century does not address these themes very well at this time of year?

All the way back in 1996 when I first started celebrating Passover as a Messianic Believer, things seemed so much easier than they seem today. I was a part of a vibrant Messianic Jewish congregation. We had a traditional *seder* in our home the first night of Passover. On the following night the congregation assembled at a hotel for a catered, sit down *seder* presentation that was also traditional. If I can recall correctly, there were at least 400 people in attendance, things went very smoothly, and many Christian visitors were exposed to the Messianic movement and to the significance of the Passover meal for the first time, in a very orderly and professional manner. I still think back on this first *seder* and consider it to be the ideal for every congregation and fellowship.

Since the late 1990s an incredible swell of non-Jewish Believers has entered into the Messianic movement, and issues that were not issues in Messianic Judaism have arisen to the surface. A great number of debates ensue this time of year that can cause a large amount of division and in-fighting among Messianic congregations and assemblies. They all concern the season of Passover. In the past three to four years (2004-2008), in particular, I have encountered far too many people utter the line: “Everybody is wrong but me!” People who are believed to have differing opinions, are at worst chastised as not truly following the Bible, or at best somehow not having the right “revelation.” Where God's love, reason, and a fair-minded examination of the issues are I honestly do not know.

We start with the Passover *seder* itself: Are we to follow the traditional Jewish *seder* with the four glasses of wine or not? Or do we follow our own *haggadah*? Do we have lamb following Sephardic Jewish custom, or chicken following Ashkenazic Jewish custom? Do we eat with our “loins girded” (Exodus 12:11), or in a relaxed posture (Mark 14:18; Luke 22:14)? Do we allow for an egg to be on our Passover

plates? Moving forward, to what degree do we consider what is “kosher for Passover”? Is Orthodox Jewish *halachah* sufficient, do we follow the lead of the more Centrist branches of Judaism, or do we make up our own rulings? And what about the season of counting the *omer* to *Shavuot*? Do we follow the traditional, Pharisaical method of determining when to celebrate *Shavuot*, follow its competing Sadducaical method, or even follow the Essenic method as attested in the Dead Sea Scrolls?

I think it is safe to say that far too much attention has been given to some of the minutiae of this season than is appropriate—at the expense of some of the much larger issues.

With a large number of non-Jewish Believers entering into the Messianic movement, and with the rise of an independent Messianic congregational phenomenon, during this season we will usually witness a great number of a-traditional ways to celebrate Passover. We will also witness a great number of congregational leaders asserting that their way of commemorating the Festival of Freedom is *the only way*, and some will even throw down the gauntlet and say that other ways are invalid and that others are not truly “keeping Torah” or thus commemorating Passover. When the Lord looks down on us from His throne in Heaven, what does He really think? Does He see men and women united around the two most important events in the entire Bible: the Exodus of Ancient Israel from Egyptian bondage *and* the final atonement offered for our sins? Better yet, what does the enemy think when he sees much of the Messianic movement this time of year? He is probably very pleased to see many people divided and harping on one another’s ills, and that the greatest spiritual move since the First Century is ineffective to make a difference.

Is it possible, that when you sit down to remember this special season, we can all focus on some of the bigger concerns of Passover?

What does the Exodus mean to you? What does it mean to sacrifice a blameless lamb? What does it mean to be delivered via the Red Sea and brought to God’s mountain? What does it mean for the King of Kings to be conducting an intimate meal with His chosen Twelve, as He prepares to be taken and executed on false charges the next day? What does it mean for the Savior of the world to be lifted up on a painful cross? What does it mean for Yeshua to be resurrected from the dead?

The book is far from closed on some of the debates that ensue this time of year. **Only** time, more research, a greater consideration for a broad array of hermeneutical factors, and reasonable people being problem solvers, will adequately answer them. But this season is not about whether you have lamb or chicken at your *seder* meal, or whether you are a designated Pharisee or Sadducee when it comes to counting the *omer*. This season is about our all-powerful and merciful God taking an interest in His creatures. It is about God directly intervening in the affairs of His people, delivering them into His salvation, and empowering them for new opportunities. How we learn to do this as the emerging Messianic movement remains a challenge, but not an impossible one if we are guided by His Spirit. But it will not be accomplished if we brazenly assert “**Everybody is wrong but me!**” during this special time of the year. Such a statement will only cause more problems, and is not solution oriented.

Oh, how I long for those simpler times of just twelve short years ago!

JOIN THE TNN PRESS BOOK FUND

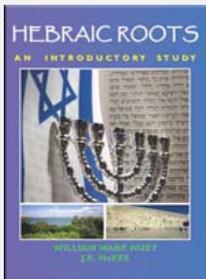


Would you like to see high quality, scholastic, and loving Messianic books like *The New Testament Validates Torah*, *The Two Houses of Israel*, or the *Messianic Sabbath Helper* available from major booksellers? Do you want your friends to be able to purchase these books without the “fear” of having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

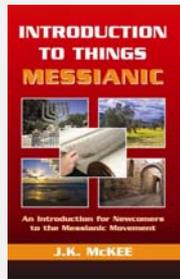
The TNN Press Book Fund is the most ambitious project ever embarked upon by our ministry. For over five years, we have been on the cutting edge preparing materials for the long-term future of the Messianic movement, ranging from introductory books to home study guides to commentaries on various books 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?*, the *Messianic Winter Holiday Helper*, *Torah In the Balance, Volume I*, and the *Messianic Spring Holiday Helper* are now available in paperback!

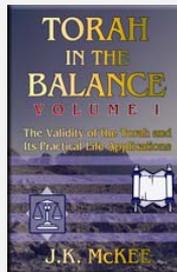
Colossians and Philemon for the Practical Messianic, *TorahScope, Volume I*, and *Acts 15 for the Practical Messianic* are being readied for the printers.



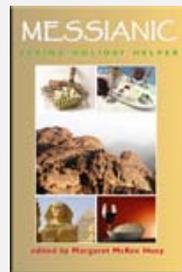
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Do you think that Messianic congregations should practice communion with bread and wine on a regular basis? I have noticed that some do, and some do not.

FAQ???
tnnonline.net/faq

When Paul writes the Corinthians, “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26), he delivers this instruction in the context of speaking to them about the yearly Passover meal (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:8-9). Many over the centuries, though, having been separated from the Hebraic Roots of our faith, have interpreted this as relating to the sacrament of communion. Certainly, while Christian communion has been a spiritually beneficial practice for many to remember the Last Supper, it is often removed from its First Century Jewish context, or its origins in the Passover. What we are to remember is the point in the *seder* meal where Yeshua lifted up the *afikoman* and said: “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me” (Luke 22:19; cf. Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22).

It is our opinion that the Lord’s Supper, our remembering of when He said “This is My body,” should be observed once a year during Passover at a **very solemn point** in the *seder* meal. However, with this said we should understand why many Christians observe it more frequently. Remembering Yeshua’s Last Supper is by no means something that is wrong or “evil.” But, most Christians’ understanding of this is separated from the Last Supper being a Passover meal, and that is why communion is often observed with leavened bread in many churches (even though various Christian traditions do use some kind of leavenless bread).

Some Messianic congregations observe a form of “communion” with *matzah* or unleavened bread. This would be more accurate than what many churches do, but it is still a definite holdover from Christian observance. It is not “wrong” to partake of a communion when it is offered, especially if you are visiting a church with a friend or relative. Yet, proper *halachah* for the Messianic community should more closely try to keep it in line with the season of *Pesach*. If Messianic congregations serve a communion with leavened bread, typically *challah*, and wine, it can only be taken as *kiddush* and not a true remembrance of Yeshua’s Last Seder where *matzah* was used. If you are in an environment that observes this kind of an observance weekly, then partake of it, but if not and you are leading a home fellowship or study group, then we recommend you keep it consigned to Passover.

I have heard some Messianic teachers say that Yeshua was not crucified on a cross. Can you clarify this for me?

Many Messianics have been hesitant to use terms like “cross” or “crucifixion” for any number of reasons. The Complete Jewish Bible, for example, uses the term “execution stake” instead of cross, and it is not uncommon to also hear the term “tree” being used. While these are perfectly acceptable alternatives to the more common terms “cross” or “crucify,” it by no means negates them. Much of the Messianic movement, sadly, has an immature attitude when it comes to the symbol of the cross. Many Messianic Jews, for whatever reason, are offended by it. Perhaps some of this is due to historical Christian abuses of the Jewish community done in the “sign of the cross,” but the same can be said of just about any religious symbol. While we should be sensitive to those who may not always like the term “cross,” the Apostle Paul himself writes that “we preach Messiah crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness” (1 Corinthians 1:23). For Believers in Yeshua, the cross is a bittersweet symbol of the pain and suffering that the Lord endured for us.

History fully attests that criminals in the Roman Empire were crucified upon some kind of a cross. It was an extremely brutal, humiliating, and painful way to suffer and die. It was intended to serve as a public warning to others not to infuriate the Roman state:

“Under the Roman Empire, crucifixion normally included a flogging beforehand. At times the cross was only one vertical stake. Frequently, however, there was a cross-piece attached either at the top to give the shape of a ‘T’ (*crux comissa*) or just below the top, as in the form most familiar in Christian symbolism (*crux immissa*). The victims carried the cross or at least a transverse beam (*patibulum*) to the place of the execution, where they were stripped and bound or nailed to the beam, raised up, and seated on a *sedile* or small wooden peg in the upright beam. Ropes bound the shoulders or torso to the cross. The feet or heels of the victims were bound or nailed to the upright stake. As crucifixion damaged no vital organs, death could come slowly, sometimes after several days of atrocious pain” (*ABD*).^a

When we consider this scholastic description of crucifixion, it portrays exactly what Yeshua did for us. Yeshua’s crucifixion on a cross at Golgotha (Calvary) in the vicinity of Jerusalem was an historical fact. **You can stand rest-assured that the traditional view of Yeshua being executed on a Roman cross is generally accurate**, even though it was by no means something elaborate or glorified as some Christian portrayals may make it. Crucifixion was common in the First Century world. Any “alternative theories” that

^a Gerald G. O’Collins, “Crucifixion,” in *ABD*, 1:1208-1209.

many Messianics may try to offer describing Yeshua's execution often try to make it something less brutal and horrific than it was. In fact, the Messianic immaturity concerning Yeshua's death can be so bad in some cases, that the book *Come Out of Her, My People* actually concludes that the cross could be the mark of the beast:

"What is the 'mark of the beast' of which we read in Rev[elation]...a mark on people's foreheads and on their right hands?...Different interpretations have been given to the 'mark of the beast,' and also the cross has been suggested."^b

If true, these are blasphemous statements designed to trivialize the sufferings that our Lord experienced for us. The fact that Yeshua was crucified on a cross does not necessarily make the cross a "holy symbol." The cross is, first and foremost, an instrument of death. When Yeshua says "take up your cross and follow Me" (Matthew 10:38; 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23), He means that you must follow Him to the point of dying or being martyred—an unpopular subject in just about any religious venue.

It is also important to note that if Yeshua had been executed as solely a Jewish criminal, then He would have been stoned. But Yeshua was not stoned; He was executed by the Romans. This is because the sin of the *entire world*—and not just the Jewish people—was responsible for His death. **We are the ones responsible for Yeshua's crucifixion, and we should not try to trivialize His death.** Crucifixion is one of the most painful and humiliating forms of execution that humans have ever devised, and those who would try to make Yeshua's death something that it was not are on extremely dangerous ground.

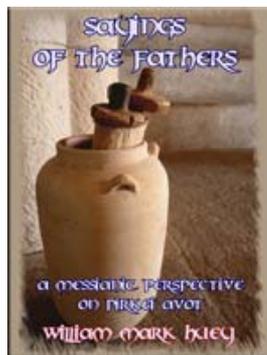
^b C.J. Koster, *Come Out of Her, My People* (Northriding, South Africa: Institute for Scripture Research, 1998), 34.

SAYINGS OF THE FATHERS

A Messianic Perspective on Pirkei Avot

Sayings of the Fathers: A Messianic

Perspective on Pirkei Avot takes readers through not just one, but two years of fifty-day reflections—and six bonus days—of some of the ancient wisdom seen in this valuable text. You will not only be introduced to some of the key views present in the Apostolic period, but also be able to weigh the value that the Jewish Sages have in your own personal study and reflection upon the Scriptures. Be prepared to join into an ancient discussion that spans the ages as you reflect on these words. Be blessed as your faith and outlook on the world are enriched, and you have more to take to your Heavenly Father in prayer!



KOSHER YOUR PLATE

edited by Margaret McKee Huey

It is my intention to bring our Messianic cooks timely recipes of interest in each issue of the OIM News.

Grilled Passover Lamb

4-5 pound boned Leg of Lamb

Prepare a boned Leg of Lamb for cooking by soaking it in salt water so that all the blood is drained out. Open up the meat so it is flat like a steak. You may cook it in one piece, or cut it in two. Rub garlic salt and pepper on the meat to your taste. Grill over an open flame until it is cooked to your liking. Our family cooks over a gas grill outdoors.

When cooked, serve with your Passover Meal!

Macaroons

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Baker's Grated Coconut
2 tablespoons flour or kosher cake meal
3 egg whites
1/3 cup sugar
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon almond extract

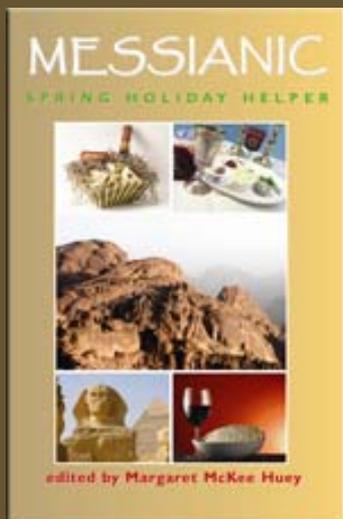
Combine coconut, sugar, flour & salt. Stir in egg whites & extract. Mix well. Drop from teaspoon onto lightly greased baking sheets. Bake at 325 degrees for 25 minutes, or until brown. Remove from baking sheets at once. Makes 2 dozen!

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

A new release available from TNN Press:

MESSIANIC

SPRING HOLIDAY HELPER



The Spring holiday season is a very busy time for those in today's Messianic movement, beginning with *Purim*, continuing to the week of Passover and Unleavened Bread, and then culminating with *Shavuot* or Pentecost. This broad season is one of the most demanding for Messianic Believers, not only as it concerns the many things to celebrate and reflect upon, but also as we strive to exhibit a positive testimony to both the Jewish and Christian communities: to Jewish people remembering the Passover and deliverance of Ancient Israel from Egypt, and to Christians memorializing the death and resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ).

The *Messianic Spring 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 wide selection of articles discussing the different salvation historical themes from the Spring season. The significance of *Purim* is addressed. The role that the Passover and the Exodus

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play, and how they relate to our redemption in the Messiah, is described. We go into great detail discussing the Last Supper, and the death and resurrection of the Messiah. We consider what it means to observe *Shavuot* as a time for both the giving of the Torah (Law) and the Holy Spirit. We offer a fair-minded and loving way to communicate to those who observe an Easter holiday often separated from anything in the Tanach or Old Testament. A selection of FAQs on the Spring holidays has been provided, as are some delicious recipes, and an educational Passover *haggadah* you can use for your home or congregation.

Let the *Messianic Spring Holiday Helper* be a resource of great blessing to you during this sacred season!

\$21.95 (paperback) plus shipping & handling; 352 pages
\$3.00 for Passover Haggadah

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