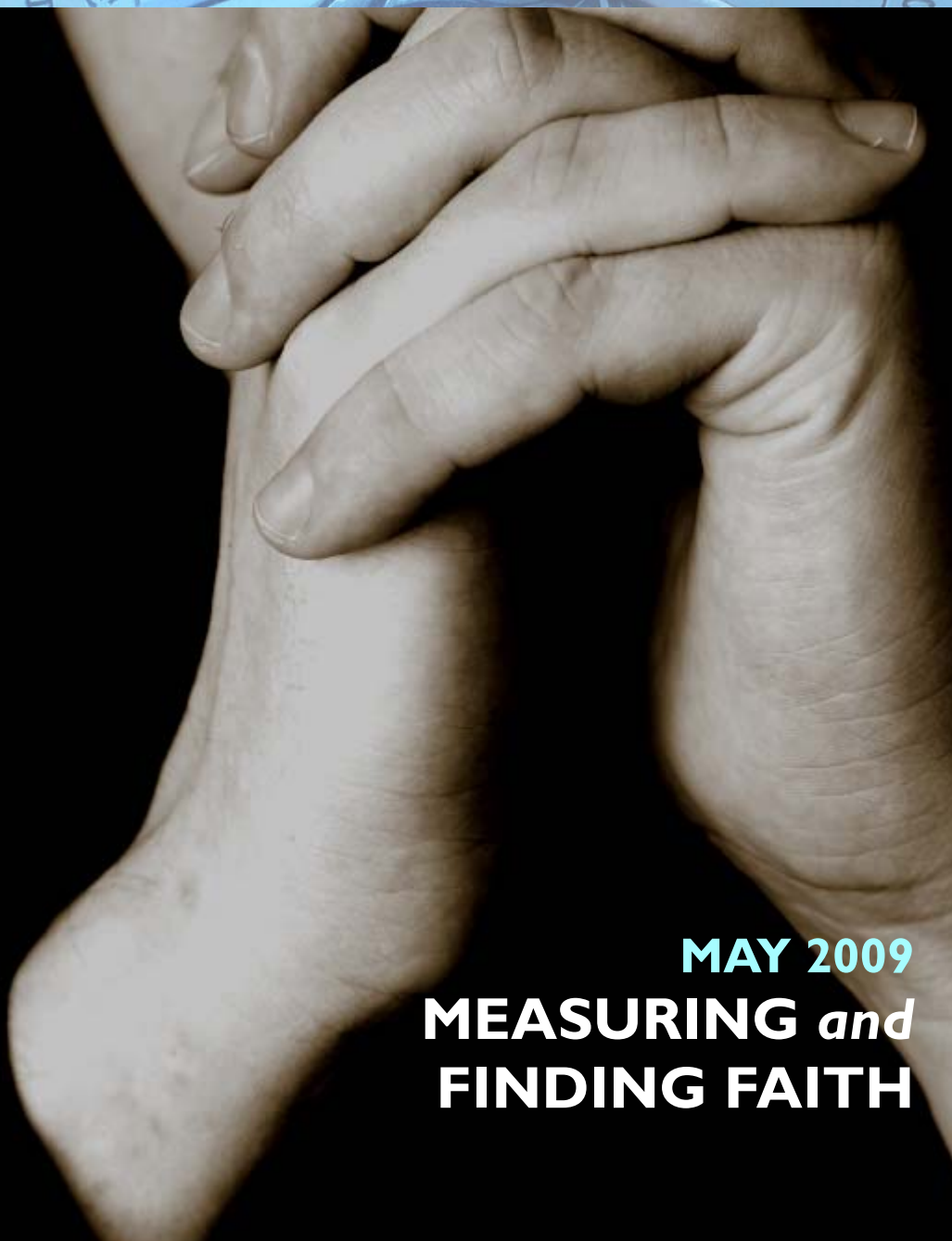




OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

REACH TEACH ENCOURAGE DISCIPLE



MAY 2009
**MEASURING *and*
FINDING FAITH**



OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

REACH TEACH ENCOURAGE DISCIPLE

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

May 2009

The interval between Passover and *Shavuot*, as we Count the Omer in anticipation of the last of the Spring festivals, is one of my favorite times of the year. Not only are we daily observing the verdant growth of nature, as our Spring garden begins to flourish, but we also seem to find renewed vigor and strength to be about the Father's tasks in the work of His Kingdom. In a world that seems to be accelerating toward the End of the Age, we remain confident that increasing the exhaustive workload is a far more productive activity than attempting to fruitlessly forecast, according to Yeshua (Matthew 24:36), an unknowable end-time scenario.

Yet we are not at all oblivious to the conversations that are initiated when Messianic Believers convene to fellowship and commune about what they perceive is going on in today's world. One such conversation I witnessed inspired parts of this month's feature article, entitled "**Measuring and Finding Faith.**" Hopefully, with the world continuing to hasten toward the End of Days, and information overload consuming more and more of our time, this article will help stimulate thoughts that will result in you spending more time devoted to prayer. As you will discover, this is one good work that just might require an enhanced measure of faith!

Additionally, an article by J.K. McKee, "**The Message of Ruth,**" will help you with remembering the festival of *Shavuot*. We hope that this traditional teaching subject will be helpful as you prepare your heart for the second of the three principal appointed times, when the Lord definitely takes notice and communes with His faithful servants in a special way. Moreover, our Red Flag topic is one that will certainly make you think and check your personal level of discernment! Your feedback and questions are always welcome. The McHuey Blog will give you some thoughts about a few of the things our ministry encounters on a regular basis.

Finally, I would like to thank those of you who contributed to the TNN Press Book Fund. We have successfully completed the softcover printing of *Hebraic Roots: An Introductory Study*. It is now available at Amazon.com, and will soon be found from a variety of other booksellers. We would very much appreciate you taking a copy of *Hebraic Roots* to your local Christian bookstore, or donating a copy to your library. We are confident that our Heavenly Father will use this project to help expedite the process of seeing the Messianic movement grow and mature into a significant force of holiness and righteousness! **Your continued support of our efforts to produce more paperback titles is greatly appreciated.**

May you all be blessed this month as we are soon to arrive at the Feast of Weeks!

In His Blessings,
Mark

MEASURING AND FINDING FAITH

by Mark Huey

As the world far too rapidly approaches the second decade of the Twenty-First Century, with it has come a great deal of hype regarding the year 2012. For some reason or another, the subjects of the End of the Age and Second Coming have a tendency to arise in conversations with large numbers of Messianic Believers, or for that matter, well-informed seekers that we often encounter. This should be nothing new among those seasoned Believers acquainted with some basic eschatological tenets of evangelical Christianity, because the hope of Yeshua's return is surely promised to us in the Holy Scriptures. Nevertheless, it seems like every ten to fifteen years there is a new crop of people wanting the End to "come down," who get worked in a lather about either the rapture or the onset of the Great Tribulation. Many may remember some of the buildup around "The 88 Reasons for the Rapture in 1988," or the anticipated Y2k computer meltdown in 2000 that was supposed to initiate the final apocalypse. These relatively recent false alarms, including some lesser well known scares like the Oslo Peace Accords, should be familiar to many in the current generation of Messianic Believers from the early 1990s to the present.

In a recent discussion with a faithful Messianic missionary couple, who have been to Israel for three extended visits in the past three years, our conversation eventually migrated to end-time themes and the overlaying subject of faith. This couple was walking by faith, as the Holy Spirit was using them to minister in song to many believing and non-believing Israelis during their recent sojourns to the Land—without any significant, visible means of support. In separate individual conversations I had with this couple, I heard a distinct echo from both the husband and wife, when they each communicated some serious concern about whether Yeshua will actually find faith on Earth upon His return. This prompting urged me to take another look at where the Lord spoke about this, to see if there was something He wanted me to address in my own life:

"Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, saying, 'In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man. There was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, "Give me legal protection from my opponent." For a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, "Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out.'" And the Lord said, 'Hear what the unrighteous judge said; now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?'" (Luke 18:1-8).

In this passage of Scripture, the principle of persistence and perseverance in prayer is obviously endorsed by Yeshua. The analogy of even the unrighteous judge ultimately succumbing to the consistent cries for justice, from the faithful widow, finally resulted in his ruling in her favor. The question that is asked by

Yeshua is whether the elect of God will have the same degree of determination in their prayer life to implore, beseech, and plead for justice from Him. The question is answered in the affirmative when Yeshua states that **God will bring about justice for them quickly.**

So I ask, are we as Believers persisting like the widow in our petitions for God's justice? Or are we simply complaining and jawboning about all of the problems leading to frustration and a sense of hopelessness?

In this day and age of apparent judgment, dripping down in slow motion upon America, I am convicted about my relative lack of prayer. I should be entreating the Almighty for relief from the sentence of ungodly rulers, among a multitude of other requests! Yet it dawned upon me that consistent prayer and supplication to our Heavenly Father requires a certain **measure of faith** that He should detect from our prayers. We have to believe in our hearts that taking the time to ardently come before Him, and plead our cause, is a worthwhile use of our time. When Paul addressed the Romans, encouraging them to offer themselves up as a living sacrifice, he told them that every Believer is endowed or allotted a certain measure of faith:

"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.* And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith" (Romans 12:1-3).

In this informative chapter from Romans, Paul teaches about the importance of regularly—like the morning, evening, and daily sacrifices—taking the time to minister to the Lord as a part of your spiritual service of worship. Further on, while detailing the various spiritual gifts that are given to different Believers, he reminds everyone that a part of the walk of faith is being **devoted to prayer**:

"For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Messiah, and individually members one of another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *each of us is to exercise them accordingly.* if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. *Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality*" (Romans 12:4-13).

While ruminating on the subjects of finding faith when Yeshua returns, considering the measure of faith received, and devotion to prayer—the concept of faith without works definitely came to my mind. After all, as James the Just adroitly describes it, faith without works is dead:

‘Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself. But someone may *well* say, ‘You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.’ You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS,’ and he was called the friend of God. You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? **For just as the body without *the* spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead**” (James 2:17-26).

Here in this passage, James not only reminds his audience that faith without works is dead, but also that the demons—just like purported Believers—believe in the Creator God. However, the big difference should be that while the demons frightfully shudder—the redeemed should evidence their belief in God by living, walking, and acting accordingly by faith. **Obviously, one of the means to exercise such faith is to take the time and effort to be devoted to a consistent prayer life.** If you do not possess an adequate amount of faith, let me suggest that you appeal to the Holy One of Israel for an additional measure! James states earlier in his epistle that if someone lacks wisdom, then surely a fervent appeal to the Giver of all gifts might just warrant a faith upgrade:

“**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” (James 1:5-8).

As you reflect upon the need for both faith in God and wisdom from God to guide you, I would encourage you to ask yourself these convicting questions:

- What measure of faith do I have?
- Can my faith be increased?
- Do I want my faith to grow?
- Is there a connection between consistent, devoted prayer and faith?
- Do I pray faithfully every day?
- If the Lord decides to return in my lifetime, will I be one of those He finds exhibiting faith?

Remember that without faith it is impossible to please God:

“And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

There is a poetic passage of Scripture, delivered in the final days of Moses’ life, as he was admonishing the Ancient Israelites just prior to their entrance into

the Promised Land. In this excerpt of his last loving poem to the people, who might affectionately be called “Jeshurun,” Moses prophetically describes many of the problems he foresaw. These problems would not only be seen in the many perverse generations of Israel—but perhaps also, as Yeshua similarly taught, in the Last Days generation that will be lacking in faith:

“But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked—you are grown fat, thick, and sleek—then he forsook God who made him, and scorned the Rock of his salvation. They made Him jealous with strange *gods*; with abominations they provoked Him to anger. They sacrificed to demons who were not God, to gods whom they have not known, new *gods* who came lately, whom your fathers did not dread. **You neglected the Rock who begot you, and forgot the God who gave you birth.** The LORD saw *this*, and spurned *them* because of the provocation of His sons and daughters. Then He said, **‘I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be; for they are a perverse generation, sons in whom is no faithfulness.** They have made Me jealous with *what* is not God; they have provoked Me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with *those who* are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation, for a fire is kindled in My anger, and burns to the lowest part of Sheol, and consumes the earth with its yield, and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains. I will heap misfortunes on them; I will use My arrows on them. *They will be* wasted by famine, and consumed by plague and bitter destruction; and the teeth of beasts I will send upon them, with the venom of crawling things of the dust. Outside the sword will be-leave, and inside terror—both young man and virgin, the nursing with the man of gray hair. I would have said, “I will cut them to pieces, I will remove the memory of them from men,” had I not feared the provocation by the enemy, that their adversaries would misjudge, that they would say, “Our hand is triumphant, and the LORD has not done all this.” For they are a nation lacking in counsel, and there is no understanding in them. **Would that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would discern their future!”** (Deuteronomy 32:15-29).

The key to avoiding the lack of faith as the return of Yeshua eventually approaches, just might be pleading with the Lord for not only the wisdom that James says He will give generously, **but also an increased measure of faith for praying with consistency.** With wisdom, faith, and a fervent prayer life, we might just be able, like the persistent widow in the parable, to receive justice from the Holy One—and *actually know what we need to be doing and how we need to live.* On the other hand, the alternative of lacking wisdom, faith, and prayer can keep us yoked to evil spiritual forces who already know what their final destination is.

Personally, my preference is to spend eternity with the Rock of my salvation! If consistent prayer is an indication that my measure of faith is increasing—and one of its by-products is enhanced wisdom, understanding, and discernment—then developing a regular time of prayer is surely a good thing. It is a tangible action that will pay great dividends, not only now, but in the days, weeks, months, and years ahead. And of course, such faithfulness will have its eternal rewards. *Choosing to start praying consistently now is an act of faith.* For when Yeshua does return, may each of us, or our progeny, be found among the faithful!

Until the restoration of all things...

JOIN THE TNN PRESS BOOK FUND



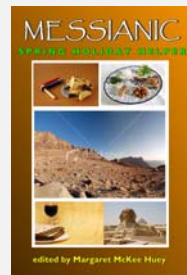
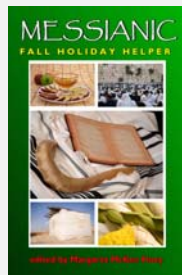
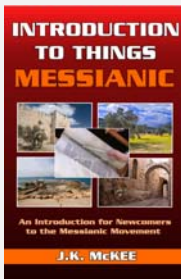
Would you like to see high quality, scholastic, and loving Messianic books like *Hebraic Roots*, *Introduction to Things Messianic*, *Torah In the Balance*, and *When Will the Messiah Return?* available from major booksellers? Do you want your friends to be able to purchase these books without the “fear” 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.

Thanks to your continuing support the paperback version of *Hebraic Roots* has just arrived from the printers! Be sure to get your copy!

We are now in the process of readying *Introduction to Things Messianic* for submission to the printers this month!

UPCOMING RELEASES:



RED FLAG

by J.K. McKee



One of the most significant reasons why God's people are to obey His Torah is given in Deuteronomy 4:6: "this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!'" (NRSV). Following God's com-

mandments will serve as a testimony to outsiders that His people are fulfilling their mandate as a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6), and are adequately serving Him as appropriate representatives. God's people are to be conduits of His goodness, as their diligent obedience to Him not only should cause them to be blessed—but enable them to operate in His wisdom.

How often do we hear about this in our Torah studies as Messianic Believers today? How often is it emphasized that we are to be formed by God into a missional community, not only actively blessing others, but also demonstrating His wisdom and power via the gospel of salvation?

One particular teacher, whose influence is quite commonplace and well known in the independent Messianic movement, was recently on a foreign speaking tour. During his encounters with various Christian pastors and ministers, this was the report sent back to the United States:

Since his feet hit the tarmac in [city name withheld] last week, [name withheld] has appeared on five radio programs teaching about "Easter" and Passover in his own inimitable way....[Name withheld] says that the call-in radio programs have become quite heated as staunch religionists scramble feverishly to defend their denominational brand of pagan sun-god worship.

Seeing these statements in light of Deuteronomy 4:6, allow me to ask you a few questions:

- Does this approach to Messianic Torah observance reflect the wisdom of God that His people are to have?
- Do outsiders who witness this approach stand in awe of Messianic Believers, really wanting to know more of God's goodness?
- Does referring to evangelical Christians as "pagan sun-god" worshippers help or hurt today's Messianic cause?
- Are sincere, born again evangelical Christians really serving the sun god, and not Yeshua the Messiah? Did you do this ?
- Do these words pass the test of Ephesians 4:29, or are they empty?

Please feel free to comment and answer any or all of the questions above. *We really do look forward to what you have to say.* E-mail us at info@outreachisrael.net

THE MESSAGE OF RUTH

by J.K. McKee

The Book of Ruth is a text that people turn to when they need to be reminded of the goodness and kindness of God's chosen toward strangers, and how He demonstrates His faithfulness through the actions of normal people. Elements common to the human condition, including: life, death, hardness, sustenance, love, and happiness are all the things that make the story of Ruth so important to the Biblical narrative. We consider Ruth when we want to be reminded about the acceptance that God displays toward us, and how He desires us to all be redeemed and be one with Him.

The account of Ruth begins during the time of the judges in Israel, when there was a famine in the land (1:1). Because the famine was so significant, Elimelech, his wife Naomi, and their two sons had to move to Moab to live in order to survive (1:2). While living in Moab, Elimelech dies (1:3). The two sons marry Moabite women, one of them being Ruth (1:4), but after a period of ten years both of the sons die, "and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband" (1:5). A dilemma arises for Naomi, as to what to do next with her life.

The good news is that Naomi hears "that the LORD had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them" (1:6). As she prepares to return to the Land of Israel, she tells her two daughters-in-law, "go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the LORD show kindness to you, as you have shown to your dead and to me. May the LORD grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband" (1:8-9a). The two daughters-in-law are distraught, declaring, "We will go back with you to your people" (1:9b). But Naomi tells them that she is unlikely to remarry, much less have any more sons for them to marry (1:12-13). The first daughter-in-law, Orpah, kisses her good by, "but Ruth clung to her" (1:14). As she leaves, Naomi encourages Ruth to do the same, but Ruth tells her very clearly: "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God" (1:16). Ruth commits to staying beside Naomi, and that only "death separates you and me" (1:17). "When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her" (1:18).

Both Naomi and Ruth make their way to Bethlehem, whose inhabitants somehow recognize that Naomi has returned. Yet, Naomi is clear to tell the people, "Don't call me Naomi...Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty...the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me" (1:20-21). The reason she says this to her old neighbors is quite clear: it was greatly bitter to be a widow in the Ancient Near East—one with no husband, sons, or any significant others to support her. Both Naomi and Ruth, while having come to Bethlehem in Israel, still find themselves destitute.

Naomi is not without any hope. She does have "a relative on her husband's side, from the clan of Elimelech, a man of standing, whose name was Boaz" (2:1). Ruth goes to glean from the fields, so that the two of them might have food to

eat (2:2), and as she does so, “she found herself working in a field belonging to Boaz” (2:3). While she is gleaning, Boaz arrives, greets the harvesters, and asks “Whose young woman is that?” (2:5). A foreman explains to Boaz that she is a Moabitess, having recently arrived in Bethlehem with Naomi (2:6). Boaz decides to be quite generous to her, saying, “My daughter, listen to me. Don’t go and glean in another field and don’t go away from here. Stay here with my servant girls. Watch the field where the men are harvesting, and follow along after the girls. I have told the men not to touch you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled” (2:8-9).

Ruth is surprised at Boaz’ graciousness, and asks him, “Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me—a foreigner?” (2:10). Boaz simply says, “I’ve been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how...you left your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge” (2:11-12). Boaz then invites her to come and eat all that she wants (2:14), and he instructs his men to show her some special treatment when she comes to glean again (2:15-16). When Ruth returns to Naomi that evening, all she can ask her is, “Where did you glean today?...Blessed be the man who took notice of you!” (2:19a). Ruth then tells Naomi that it was Boaz (2:19b).

Naomi explains to Ruth how important Boaz has been for her family: “He has not stopped showing kindness to the living and the dead...That man is our close relative; he is one of our kinsman-redeemers” (2:20). A kinsman-redeemer¹ was one whose responsibility was to redeem family lands and pay outstanding debts, to make sure that family members were not reduced to complete servitude (Numbers 27:8-11). Naomi, with little doubt, considered herself to be of “the dead,” having lost her husband and sons. Naomi advises her to stay close to Boaz’ estate, as he will allow her to glean (2:22-23).

Naomi has the wisdom to wait and see what will become of Ruth and Boaz’ new acquaintanceship. One day she tells Ruth, “My daughter, should I not try to find a home for you, where you will be well provided for? Is not Boaz...a kinsman of ours?” (3:1-2). Naomi instructs her to go to Boaz’ threshing floor, wait until he eats and lies down, and then uncover his feet and lie down. She is to wear “perfume...and put on [her] best clothes” (3:3). Lying down next to one’s feet was a customary, nonverbal way of requesting marriage in those days.²

Ruth follows Naomi’s instructions. “When Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits, he went over to lie down at the far end of the grain pile. Ruth approached quietly, uncovered his feet and lay down. In the middle of the night something startled the man, and he turned and discovered a woman lying at his feet” (3:7-8). Awakening, Ruth tells Boaz, “Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a kinsman-redeemer” (3:9). Boaz cannot help but be impressed with her, as he has shown her kindness and beneficence since he first saw her. He responds with the words, “This kindness is greater than

¹ Heb. *go’elenu*; “one of our closest relatives” (NASU).

² Duane A. Garrett, ed., et. al., *NIV Archaeological Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 391.

that which you showed earlier. You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor. And now, my daughter, don't be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All my fellow townsmen know that you are a woman of noble character" (3:10-11).

Boaz then tells Ruth, "there is a kinsman-redeemer nearer than I. Stay here for the night, and in the morning if he wants to redeem, good; let him redeem. But if he is not willing, as surely as the LORD lives I will do it" (3:12-13). While Boaz was a close family member to Naomi, there was apparently another kinsman-redeemer who was much closer in relation. Because he was closer, he got the first choice of Ruth—but Boaz is clear to say that if he declines he will gladly take her. Boaz lets her return the next morning to Naomi, with "six measures of barley" (3:15) not wanting her to be empty-handed (3:16-17). Naomi is pleased with what has transpired, and is clear to tell Ruth: "Wait, my daughter, until you find out what happens. For the man will not rest until the matter is settled today" (3:18).

Boaz goes to the gate of the town, waiting for the closer kinsman-redeemer to arrive (4:1). Explaining the situation in front of the town elders, he tells the man, "Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our brother Elimelech. I thought I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest that you buy it in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, do so. But if you will not, tell me, so I will know. For no one has the right to do it except you, and I am next in line" (4:3-4). The man agrees, but then Boaz is keen to tell him, "On the day you buy the land from Naomi and from Ruth the Moabitess, you acquire the dead man's widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property" (4:5). It is then that this kinsman-redeemer does not wish to acquire Naomi's land, as it may endanger his own estate (4:6). Boaz now has the right to acquire this property himself (4:8). Boaz then assertively declares to those gathered around him:

"Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelech, Kilion and Mahlon. I have also acquired Ruth the Moabitess, Mahlon's widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from the town records. Today you are witnesses!" (4:9-10).

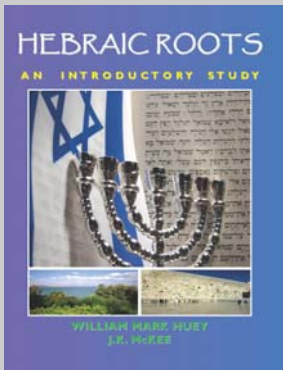
Those at the gate of the city express their desire that God would bless him, and that "the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel" (4:11). "So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife" (4:12), and Ruth has a son. Naomi is restored to a place of having her needs taken care of, and God is clearly credited with sending her a kinsman-redemer (4:14-15). Naomi helps to raise Boaz and Ruth's son, Obed. As the book closes, Obed "was the father of Jesse, the father of David" (4:16ff).

The Book of Ruth has a timeless message for every person who reads it, who needs to be reminded that when one joins to God's people, He is sure to provide. For some reason or another, the Moabitess Ruth knew there was something significant about Naomi's people and the God of Israel, and she did desire to join with them leaving Moab behind. Destitute and without a means of provision, Boaz takes a liking to Ruth, and is not only willing to purchase Naomi's land, but

also take Ruth as his own wife. Boaz steps in as the kinsman-redeemer, when the closer kinsman-redeemer did not desire to take the required action. As idealistic as it may sound, the Book of Ruth concludes with a happy ending, and the reader is told that from the line of Boaz and Ruth would come King David.

While Ruth can surely be read and considered at any time of year, in the Jewish tradition Ruth is often contemplated during the festival of *Shavuot*. Why is this the case? It is because the giving of God's Torah on Mount Sinai to Israel is not to be an Israel-only affair. It is to be something that involves Israel reaching out beyond itself and serving the nations. Moab was one of the most rightly-hated nations by Israel, due to its great idolatry, abominations, and the child sacrifices it would offer to Molech. Yet in Ruth, a Moabite woman is nevertheless attracted to Israel's God, welcomed among Israel's people, and is shown true love by Boaz.

What does the Book of Ruth teach us as today's Messianics? It asks us to make sure that we are accomplishing that mission—of seeing that even those of some of the most hated people can be welcomed into the fold, and be shown all of the goodness and grace that God offers. Fulfilling this task is only intensified for those of us who believe in Yeshua, who has provided final atonement for all sin, and in emulating the example of His Apostles who accomplished this call to the max.



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What About the Picture?

by J.K. McKee

It has been my observation over the past ten years or so that today's Messianic movement does not do very well when it comes to the subject of other societies and cultures, particularly those of the Biblical period. While we may sing songs that include praises to the God who saves "every tribe and tongue and people and nation" (Revelation 5:9), in practice what we can often find is a great deal of ungodly prejudice and assumption.

There is no more excellent example of this that I have witnessed then in the great amount of criticism issued against the Greek civilization. Greek people are still those created by God and loved by Him, and as the Apostolic Scriptures testify, many of them welcomed Yeshua the Messiah into their lives and were saved! Is this something to be frowned upon? I think not.

I would agree that there has been some negative influence on theology and spirituality caused by Hellenistic philosophy. *No honest theologian today disagrees with this.* Yet at the same time, there are often things that today's Messianics too hastily classify as "Greek," that they fail to provide documentation for. Who said or believed such-and-such a thing? Plato? Aristotle? Xenophon? Epictetus? I have no problem of not adopting a so-called Greek mindset on an issue, provided that a teacher can actually tell me and quote for me what a Greek philosopher taught.

Several months ago, as I completed the reworked edition of my article "To Be Absent From the Body," now at 62 pages, I had to discuss what the Greeks actually believed about the afterlife. What we find for this issue is that there is too much variance to actually claim that "the Greeks believed..." Some believed in an afterlife in Hades, some believed in reincarnation, and some believed in nothingness. To claim that the ancient Jewish Pharisees picked up a theology about an afterlife from interactions with the Greeks is actually quite inaccurate and far too simplistic. Many of those who make this claim, unknowingly quoting liberal scholars, fail to realize that the same liberal scholars think that the Jews picked up the idea of resurrection from the Greeks! Furthermore, societies even predating the Israelites in the Ancient Near East believed in some kind of disembodied post-mortem state. One could just as easily argue that the Israelite slaves picked up this concept in Egypt.

And that is what I would like to comment about.

How was your Passover this year? I hope it was a blessed time, where you were able to once again understand the great depth of Yeshua's salvation, and recommit yourselves to living out the message of the Exodus. To what extent did you really discuss the importance of the Exodus? Did you really take seriously God's word to Pharaoh of how "I will send all My plagues on you and your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is no one like Me in all the earth" (Exodus 9:14)?

I have always taken verses like Exodus 9:14 to be very serious claims of how the God of Israel, while having chosen a special people for His purposes, nonetheless has a wider and greater plan for the entire Earth. Israel's chosenness is one where they must accomplish His mandate of being a conduit of His goodness and love to others. Deuteronomy 4:6 admonishes that Israel's keeping of the Torah will serve as a testimony of His wisdom to others. As many of us believe that the Father is restoring the Torah to a place of prominence among His people today, then we need to learn how to be wise and how to properly live out such a message.





Since I returned on my vacation to the United Kingdom in July, I have been using a picture of myself taken in the Egyptian Gallery of the British Museum in London. Recently, a McHuey Blog reader—not knowing where the picture was taken—snidely commented,

Why does a "believer" have himself photographed with a pagan statue? Smiling, no less.

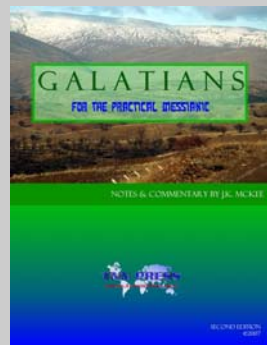
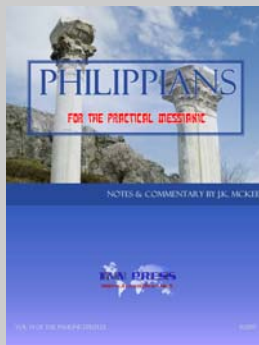
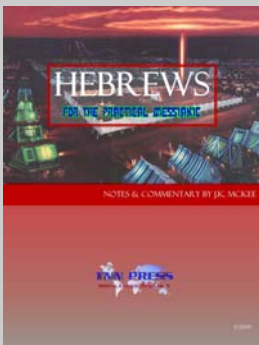
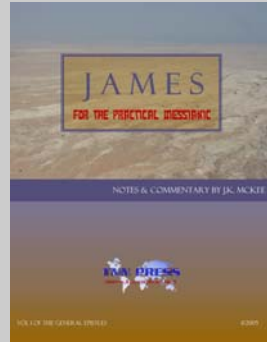
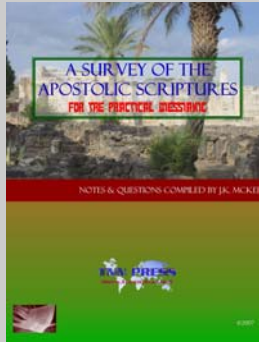
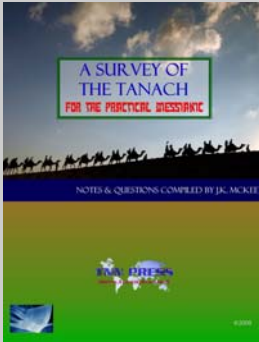
This is exactly the kind of attitude and prejudice that I have sadly and unfortunately come to expect from many of today's Messianics. No attempt was made by the reader to ask where the photo was taken, or what was being communicated by me using it. No dialogue or discussion about it—just prejudicial remarks and attack.

Many of you have probably just scratched your heads when seeing this photo. Others of you know that this is an obvious picture taken in a museum, in a gallery of artifacts from the Biblical period. You *expect* educational ministries like ours to go to such museums, and interact directly with archaeological and cultural finds. We do this so we can teach the Scriptures with greater precision and accuracy, when a subject like "Egypt" comes up.

So what does the picture communicate? The relief is actually a representation of Ramses II, who many believe was the Pharaoh of the Exodus. What did Exodus 9:14 communicate to this Pharaoh? He was chosen by God to play a crucial role in the most important event of the Tanach Scriptures. For us as Believers today, when we see a statue of Ramses II, we are reminded of how our all-powerful God humiliated the Thirteenth Century B.C.E. superpower, and delivered His people from bondage. And yet, even though Egypt was humiliated, and Ancient Israel was delivered, it is still said "A mixed multitude also went up with them" (Exodus 12:38).

We need to remove ourselves from the ungodly prejudices we have allowed to fester in our midst for too long. If we do not learn to communicate better, empowered by God's wisdom, then the Messianic movement will not make the kind of impact we should have on people of Greek ancestry, Egyptian ancestry, or any other kind of ancestry. We have to learn to not make snap judgments, but be well-informed and thoughtful before we open our mouths. Can any of us as Messianics actually communicate with the Epicureans and Stoics of our day, as Paul did at the Aeropagus in Athens in Acts 17? Perhaps we will have to leave that discussion for another time...

FOR THE PRACTICAL MESSIANIC COMMENTARIES AVAILABLE FROM TNN PRESS



TNN Press' "for the Practical Messianic" commentary series is one of the most important resources available in the Messianic movement today. This ever-expanding series addresses the Scriptures from a distinct Messianic viewpoint, that is engaged with contemporary Biblical scholarship and careful attention to detail. Volumes that are presently available tackle some of the most difficult-to-understand texts of the Apostolic Scriptures for Messianic Believers. In the years to come, this series will undoubtedly raise the bar of Messianic Biblical examination to a level that it currently has not seen, as each asks questions that will challenge us spiritually

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. In this issue, I have included wonderful kosher recipes from my daughter Jane McKee and my sister Virginia Pillsbury.

Janie's Famous Chicken Salad

1 lb. chicken breasts skinned & cut into 1 inch pieces cooked in lime or lemon juice in a frying pan
¾ cup mayonnaise – to taste
lemon juice to taste
1 cup chopped celery

Mix the chicken in a bowl after cooking with about a cup of mayonnaise and a cup of chopped celery. Add more lemon juice to taste. Add salt & pepper to taste. You can add any of the extras below to make this salad truly special.

extras:

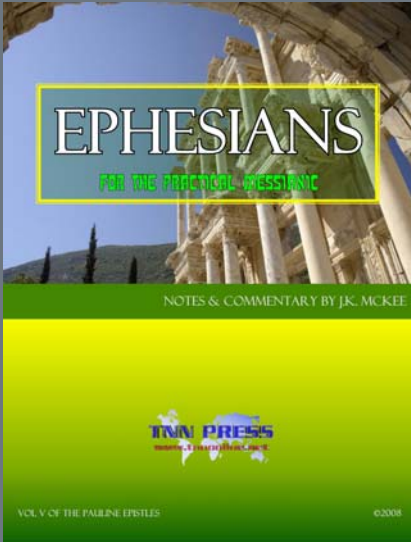
½ cup grapes (halved)
¼ cup onions
¼ cup pecans

Aunt Gin's Mediterranean Spinach Melt

1 package frozen spinach, thawed and drained
1 clove crushed garlic
¼ cup sour cream
4 oz crumbled Feta cheese
1 tablespoon chopped onion
2 tablespoons mayonnaise
3 plum tomatoes, chopped
1 loaf Italian (or French) bread, sliced thinly

Mix all ingredients together in a bowl (except bread). Spread mixture on slices of bread. Bake at 350 degrees for about 15 minutes.

A new commentary available from TNN Press:
EPHESIANS
FOR THE PRACTICAL MESSIANIC



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opinions present today surrounding the dividing wall, and complimentary and egalitarian views of the household codes. References to Tanach (Old Testament) concepts in the author's words are considered, along with careful consideration for how Ephesians challenges us as a faith community trying to achieve our Father's objectives. Poignant questions as to how we can be molded into a mature people are asked for today's season of Messianic uncertainty.

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In varying degrees, Ephesians has often been highly valued by today's Messianic movement because of its emphasis of Jewish and non-Jewish Believers being a part of the Commonwealth of Israel. It does speak of the unity that we are to all have in the Lord, as a testament to the grander redemption of Creation that will come in the eschaton. But while Ephesians is a text that we often turn to, Messianics are often not aware of the more detailed issues surrounding this letter present in contemporary scholarship.

In the commentary *Ephesians for the Practical Messianic*, TNN Online editor J.K. McKee addresses the known and unknown questions that this important letter asks us as Messianic Believers. A large Jewish and Greco-Roman Mediterranean background is considered of the issues. Careful and detailed attention has been given to the



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