



OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

REACH TEACH ENCOURAGE DISCIPLE



MAY 2010
SHAVUOT

a Celebration to Remember



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STATEMENT OF BELIEF

Outreach Israel Ministries and TNN Online

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For a fuller Statement of Faith, consult the OIM website

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

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OIM UPDATE

May 2010

With the Counting of the Omer coming to an end this month, the celebration of the Feast of Weeks or *Shavuot* completes the Spring feasts and launches the Messianic community into the lengthy Summer months before the Fall feasts. In past years, our ministry has co-hosted a regional convocation in Orlando centered on this second of three appointed times, when God's people are directed to gather together and bring an offering before Him (Deuteronomy 16:16). One of our primary goals in doing this was to inspire other Messianics to also make *Shavuot* a major part of their yearly worship in their respective communities of faith. Appreciably, we are aware of a number of fellowships and congregations which have made this appointed time a special day of praise and worship.

In recent years, primarily due to trying economic circumstances, we have toned down our event by moving it from larger venues to our local congregational facility. While the numbers may have been reduced, the enthusiasm to enter into the presence of the Lord by those in attendance has never waned. We have discovered that it is not necessarily the size of the gathering or the magnitude of the event location which is important, but rather how the hearts of the participants are wholly dedicated to praising, worshipping, and desiring to learn more about the Holy One of Israel. Clearly, He continues to bless us with His presence, and it is obvious that He is more concerned about the quality of the hearts seeking Him rather than the quantity. So even if you are an individual, a family, a Torah study group, or a congregation or host of congregations—the key to receiving His blessing is to seek Him with all your being. Do this, and know that in so doing, He will pour out His blessings and touch your lives in a special way!

While pondering past commemorations and contemplating the present *Shavuot*, I was led to consider the future as there will be a calendar coincidence which will take place two years from now at *Shavuot* 2012. This month's lead article is entitled, "**Shavuot: A Celebration to Remember.**" I am eager to see a variety of actions generated from this, which we hope will materialize over the next 24 months. Please consider joining our Facebook Event group for Pentecost-Shavuot 2012, and encourage your fellow Messianic and Christian brothers and sisters to likewise join in the effort to unite on this special day!

This issue of OIM News also includes a recent McHuey Blog I wrote, "**Good for Evil.**" I hope to encourage you, our readers, to be about the business of always looking for opportunities to share the gospel.

We once again praise the Holy One for His provision as the TNN Press Book Printing project moves forward, as the resources become available. We currently have three titles in the que which are in the final stages of being released.

Until the restoration of all things...

Mark Huey

SHAVUOT

a Celebration to Remember

by Mark Huey

For many in the general population of the world seeking answers about the future, the alarming propaganda about the upcoming year of 2012 presents some intriguing hypotheses, which undoubtedly creates more questions than lucid rejoinders. Capitalistic entrepreneurs are naturally taking advantage of all the hype about the end of the 5,125-year Mayan calendar on December 21, 2012. Websites fomenting gloom and doom have mushroomed, along with two Hollywood movies exploiting the fear associated with the topics of the “end of the world” at worst, or a “spiritual transformation” or so-called “New Age” at best. Lamentably, even those who have influence within the Christian world have taken advantage of some of the extraordinary publicity associated with the year 2012. Prophecy teachers are making claims about 2012, and are predicting the rapture, Second Coming, and a whole host of events to consider.

Regrettably, even our Messianic community of faith has fallen prey to prognostications associated with 2012 and the *pagan* Mayan calendar. Frequently, we hear various predications about “blood red moons” during the Biblical appointed times—like at Passover or *Sukkot* when eclipsed full moons are *only* astronomically possible. This has only multiplied as Messianic end-time prophecy conferences have become a feeding staple for many. For those who are supposed to be “set-apart” from those exclusively relying on their human minds and intellect to interpret what is transpiring around the globe, *this is a sad testimony*. After all, according to the Apostle Paul, Believers in the Messiah Yeshua should be supernaturally enabled by **His mind** in order to demonstrate real maturity, wisdom, and discernment:

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM [Isaiah 40:13]? But we have the mind of Messiah” (1 Corinthians 2:12-16).

For far too many years, our family has witnessed many people—who claim to be Believers and be filled with the Holy Spirit—make wild and off-the-wall correlated associations between natural physical events and Israel, which might seem plausible to the unenlightened mind, but to those with the mind of Messiah, they generate confusion and anxiety. How many times have you heard someone say that a physical catastrophe is directly caused by something happening in or to Israel or Jerusalem? Whether this is an earthquake, tsunami, volcanic eruption, blizzard, mudslide, forest fire, heat wave, tornado, or *whatever*? Rather than act like reasonable people, who recognize that God created the forces of

nature to function—and that certain climatic or geological phenomena are indeed predicable—there are many sincere Believers who look at nature as ancient pagans did: “*The gods are angry with us! How do we appease them?!*” This is not exactly like the ground opening up and swallowing the White House; these are just general activities that are believed to be connected to Israel. Certainly while something current like the BP oil platform in the Gulf of Mexico spewing crude is a major ecological disaster—which will negatively affect many lives—this was not at all the result of any current U.S. policy toward the Middle East, but severe human error.¹

Recently, the absurdity of this logic was considerably heightened and brought to international attention, when an Islamic cleric hypothesized that the recent surge in earthquakes and volcanic activity was directly connected to the increasing preponderance of scantily clad women. Thankfully, what was a tongue in cheek response, to “the affront” of women who wore much less than the traditional Muslim burqa, was called “Boobquake.” Hopefully, the people of the Messianic community and Believers, in general, could see the ludicrousness of directly associating such acts of people with our planet’s natural gyrations.

Nevertheless, since the First Century C.E. some curiosities about the future remain consistent. Even after the Messiah informed His Disciples about what to expect, as they voiced some of their “end-time” concerns, they still queried Him about when He was going to come as the King:

“As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, ‘Tell us, when will these things happen, and what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?’ And Yeshua answered and said to them, ‘See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, “I am the Messiah,” and will mislead many. You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for *those things* must take place, but *that* is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are *merely* the beginning of birth pangs” (Matthew 24:3-8).

Understand that Yeshua was aware of how many will come claiming Him in some way, and yet they will advertently or inadvertently **mislead many**. Yeshua knew that wars and rumors of wars among nations and kingdoms, famines, and earthquakes were just the beginning of the problems which would be experienced. *They would not signal the very end*. Yeshua categorically states, “but of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone” (Matthew 24:36).

What is far more important than being worried about natural disasters and political upheavals, is whether or not one has repented of sins! *Yeshua required His followers to repent in order to be redeemed*. In responding to a scene of where a tower in Siloam had collapsed, killing eighteen innocents, the Lord did not make any connection to the other events in Jerusalem with Pilate mixing the blood of Galileans with sacrifices. Yeshua instead used this scene to call the people to repentance:

¹ For a further discussion, consult the Confronting Issues booklet *Looking at the Signs of the Times* by Margaret McKee Huey.

“Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. And Yeshua said to them, ‘Do you suppose that these Galileans were *greater* sinners than all *other* Galileans because they suffered this *fate*? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were *worse* culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:1-5).

Whenever a natural disaster or predictable astronomical event occurs, people experiencing or witnessing these events have the opportunity to respond to the God of Creation by recognizing His hand in designing the universe. Perhaps the expression, “But for the grace of God, there go I...” makes more sense when one realizes how *thankfulness* should be the response when one is protected from calamities. According to Yeshua, being thankful is good, but seeking repentance is even better!

With this said, we need to focus more of our attention not on things beyond our control—but on what the Lord **wants us to do as His people**. This month, not only will people within the Jewish and Messianic communities have an opportunity to remember the Feast of Weeks or *Shavuot*, but many Christians will also be remembering the day of Pentecost. Today’s Messianics are quite unique in that they understand *Shavuot* for the significance that both Jews and Christians attach to it. We know how *Shavuot* is designated to be one of the appointed times in Leviticus 23, and about how special it is to draw near to the Lord during the fifty-day Counting of the Omer (Leviticus 23:15-16), culminating in a very special commemoration.

Within Judaism, *Shavuot* traditionally remembers the giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. It is also not uncommon for it to be a day of some kind of proclamation (cf. Leviticus 23:21). The Torah originally specified how *Shavuot* (along with Passover and *Sukkot*) was to be a pilgrimage festival when the Ancient Israelites were to gather in Jerusalem.

“Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread and at the Feast of Weeks and at the Feast of Booths, and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed” (Deuteronomy 16:16).

Ideally today, I am sure that we would all love it if every family could travel to Israel and be in Jerusalem to gather with others from all around the world, to simply declare things about God’s blessings and goodness. Obviously, when the Ancient Israelites were primarily confined to the immediate vicinity of Canaan, this was accomplished most easily. But in modern times with Jewish communities and Messiah followers spread all over the globe, one’s commemoration of the Feast of Weeks is mostly confined to the local synagogue or fellowship. Christians who remember Pentecost make mention of it in their Sunday worship service, and they make a diligent effort to recall the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Believers gathered, only ten days after the ascension of Yeshua into Heaven:

“When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. Now there were Jews dwelling in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. They were amazed and astonished, saying, ‘Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we each hear *them* in our own language to which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them in our *own* tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God.’ And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, ‘What does this mean?’” (Acts 2:1-12).

For Messianic Believers, seeing the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit and salvation of Jewish people from all over the Mediterranean—is **something quite encouraging!** Since this time, the world has never been the same. And, these people were not just gathered in Jerusalem because they were visiting friends and sightseeing: they were remembering to obey the instruction given by Moses. Apparently, the revelation of the truth of the gospel was so intense and supernatural, that three thousand were pierced to the heart and saved:

“Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brethren, what shall we do?’ Peter *said* to them, ‘Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Yeshua the Messiah for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.’ And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, ‘Be saved from this perverse generation!’ So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:37-41).

Apparently, the unity experienced by those seeking righteousness, attending *Shavuot* in Jerusalem—who received the Holy Spirit and who were saved—was overwhelming. The growing community of Messiah followers experienced considerable unity in the days following, as people contributed to the financial and material needs of others, as their numbers grew:

“They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they *began* selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the

people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved" (Acts 2:42-47).

Can you imagine what would have happened if you had been one of those present at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Without doubt, the bulk of conversations among the new Believers centered around the sacrificial work of the Lamb of God for human sin. Comments like having all things in common, sharing with all, continuing with one mind, breaking bread together, taking meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, and praising God—are liberally seen in Luke's record of the days following the outpouring of the Spirit. *There was a strong tenor of unity and camaraderie among the brothers and sisters!*

But when Messianics remember *Shavuot* today, is this what we experience?

If you have ever been a participant in remembering *Shavuot* within the Messianic community of faith, you may have witnessed a noticeable lack of unity. Not all of today's Messianic Believers are agreed on the "correct" day to actually remember *Shavuot*. In the past when our ministry held *Shavuot* gatherings in Orlando, we remembered the feast during an entire weekend. Most Messianics do not do this, and instead remember *Shavuot* at their local congregation. In almost all of Messianic Judaism, the traditional date of 06 Sivan on the Rabbinical calendar is when *Shavuot* is remembered—with the Counting of the Omer beginning after the High Sabbath of Unleavened Bread (cf. Leviticus 23:11). Within the independent Messianic community, it is more common to find those who interpret "the day after the sabbath" to be the weekly Sabbath, and so *Shavuot* is always remembered on a Sunday. Strong discussions have taken place on both sides,² but sadly many innocent Believers who simply want to go before the Lord and entreat Him for His grace get caught in the crossfire of immature (and often under-informed) debates. Consequently, every year when *Shavuot* comes up, there is a little bit of tension, with much of the Messianic movement being out of synch regarding the "correct" date to celebrate.

As we look forward to remembering *Shavuot* later this month, there is always the trepidation about infighting because of different interpretations about the date. A number of years ago I did some searching into the calendar challenges, and found that the last time when the traditional date of 06 Sivan was on a Sunday—thus eliminating conflicts—was 1998. I looked ahead to the next time that 06 Sivan was going to be on a Sunday, and found that it was going to be May 27, 2012. And within the Christian community, this same date was present on the religious calendar for remembering Pentecost.

With all of the negative prognostications about the year 2012 seeming to dominate the Internet, blogs, Hollywood productions, and even some network newscasts—maybe we need to focus on something more beneficial for people of faith. It appears that for the first time in over a decade in 2012, the Jewish community, the Messianic community, and the Christian community **will all be remembering *Shavuot* or Pentecost at the same time.** Regardless of what specific theological or spiritual significance they give to it, it is certainly better to focus on the giving of the Law, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the creation of a

² Consult the FAQ entry on the TNN Online website, "Omer Count."

unique community of Messiah followers—than on fear mongering and the apocalypse.

Is this going to be one of those rare times when it would be beneficial for people to reflect on the positive, and do something about it?

I want to see God's people educated and instructed about what is right, pure, and of good repute (Philippians 4:8). I also want to see those who acknowledge the One God of Israel come together. So, in thinking about what can be done, is it not useful to employ one of the many available technological tools in an effort to bring Jews, Messianics, and Christians together? Is it not appropriate to focus on what we have in common, on one day in the future? Lamentably, many of today's Jews and Christians do not understand the fact that both serve the same God. Many distortions down through the millennia have been used to separate and divide them from fellowship and dialogue. This is a tragic result of misinformation and human agenda, with the prince of the power of air having exploited many sordid yet willing vessels. As Paul put it in his letter to Believers in Asia Minor:

"In which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest...For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*" (Ephesians 2:2-3; 6:12).

It is high time for Jews and Christians to stop being victims of the wiles of the Devil—especially when we know he is going to be active in 2012 with overblown hype and paranoia. *So what can we do to see some of this halted?* Our ministry has recently created a group on Facebook simply called **Pentecost-Shavuot 2012**. We want to promote a day of unity for Jews and Christians on May 27, 2012—so that whether we are remembering the giving of the Torah to Moses, and/or the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we can at least acknowledge our common faith in Israel's God. Messianic Believers should be able to facilitate the needs of both groups, as we all fairly come together in a season when it can be common for people to be drawn apart.

I am also hoping at this stage that Outreach Israel Ministries can put together a tour to the Land of Israel, which will coincide with these dates (obviously with various specifics to be worked out). So for those of you who desire to go to Jerusalem and see what the Lord might do at Pentecost-Shavuot, start saving your money and make your plans now!

As we steadily approach 2012 it is our ministry desire that this new Facebook group will attract many Messianic Believers and Christians who love Israel, to join together in some kind of common cause. Of course, our ministry will make available our extensive educational resources to those who join in, to encourage positive and constructive conversation. In all things, Yeshua reminds us that a Kingdom or city or house divided against itself will not stand!

“And knowing their thoughts Yeshua said to them, ‘Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself will not stand’ (Matthew 12:25).

What does it mean if Jews, Messianics, and Christians are only *at odds* with division caused exclusively by human dogma, strife, and acrimony? Could coming together to simply praise and worship the One God of Israel make a positive difference?

While two years into the future might seem like a long time to some, the reality is that the next two years will pass far too quickly. If you wish to join with our ministry efforts—to contribute to something positive and constructive in 2012, rather than something negative and disabling—then please do. Today’s Messianic movement needs to put its past record of sensationalism, fear, and division behind itself. People need to be brought together, and focus on the Lord. **I pray that in 2012, we will experience a *Shavuot* to remember!**

Until the restoration of all things...



PASTORAL EPISTLES BIBLE STUDY NOW AVAILABLE!



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!

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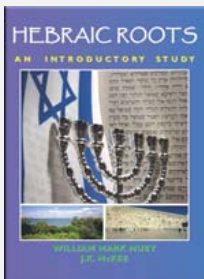


Would you like to see high quality, scholastic, and loving Messianic books like *The New Testament Validates Torah* or the *Messianic Sabbath Helper* available from major booksellers? Do you want your friends to be able to purchase these books without the “fear” of having to contact a Messianic ministry?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

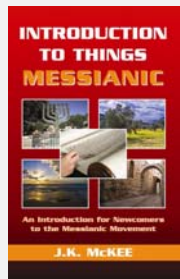
The TNN Press Book Fund is the most ambitious project ever embarked upon by our ministry. For over five years, we have been on the cutting edge preparing materials for the long-term future of the Messianic movement, ranging from introductory books to home study guides to commentaries on various books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

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

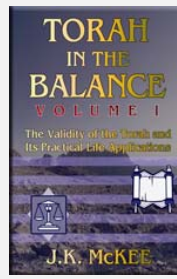
Colossians and Philemon for the Practical Messianic, TorahScope, Volume I, and Acts 15 for the Practical Messianic are being readied for the printers.



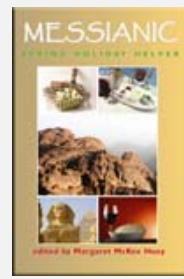
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Do you ever hear something that so rattles your heart and spirit that your internal voice literally screams at you? Perhaps over the years because of your sincere pursuit of God and the Holy Scriptures, you have inculturated your mind with verses like the following. Deep in your heart, you know the profound distinction between good and evil:



“He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous, both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD” (Proverbs 17:15).

When you hear words or witness actions which remind you of this truism, you are appalled with the abominable behavior.

If you keep up with current events in the United States, some of the things that you might be hearing are quite alarming. Many of our leaders should be more tactful and careful with their words, and it is not always comforting to know how many *only have* positional authority over you because of the democratic process. How many of us have fallen into the trap of imparting our values and mindset onto others, who *only claim* they adhere to the basic Judeo-Christian values which form the foundation of Western Civilization? Regrettably, the actions—and even the words—of these charlatans speak much louder than their meager attempts to subterfuge their actual motivations.

Recently, two media interviews I saw by authors of new books, which are shedding some light on the modern cultural substitution of good for evil and evil for good, brought this passage of Scripture from Isaiah to mind. It is abundantly clear that many in the public arena, be they politicians or the media, are unapologetically calling evil good and good evil:

“Therefore My people go into exile for their lack of knowledge; and their honorable men are famished, and their multitude is parched with thirst. Therefore Sheol has enlarged its throat and opened its mouth without measure; and Jerusalem's splendor, her multitude, her din of revelry and the jubilant within her, descend into it. So the common man will be humbled and the man of importance abased, the eyes of the proud also will be abased. But the LORD of hosts will be exalted in judgment, and the holy God will show Himself holy in righteousness. Then the lambs will graze as in their pasture, and strangers will eat in the waste places of the wealthy. Woe to those

who drag iniquity with the cords of falsehood, and sin as if with cart ropes; who say, 'Let Him make speed, let Him hasten His work, that we may see *it*; and let the purpose of the Holy One of Israel draw near and come to pass, that we may know *it!*' Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight! Woe to those who are heroes in drinking wine and valiant men in mixing strong drink, who justify the wicked for a bribe, and take away the rights of the ones who are in the right! Therefore, as a tongue of fire consumes stubble and dry grass collapses into the flame, so their root will become like rot and their blossom blow away as dust; for they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel!" (Isaiah 5:13-24).

Lamentably, the Orwellian doublespeak we witness should be most disconcerting, if the history of disobedient Israel is going to repeat itself in some large capacity via the licentious debauchery of post-Christian America. While the parallels are notable, no one absolutely knows how God is going to deal with those who blatantly oppose Him, or strongly protest that He does not exist. Nevertheless, the "woes" of Isaiah are something to consider, especially since these patterns of ignorance of knowledge, advancing darkness instead of light, substituting bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, ignoble personal pride, alcohol abuse, open bribery, and distorting the rights of the just—are reoccurring en masse as the Lord's return approaches. For some, the multiple woes of the Book of Revelation might also come to mind.

But for the true Believer in the God of the Scriptures, these days represent incredible opportunities to become salt and light to people all over the world, who need redemption. As the Messiah Yeshua admonishes His followers, do not become tasteless salt or a light hidden under a basket:

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty *again*? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:13-16).

Whether you realize it or not, the same alarms that are upsetting you are also discouraging untold millions who are hearing or are witnessing similar things. Innately, they know that what is happening in America and the world is terribly wrong, but in many cases, they have been so programmed by the

world, the flesh, and the Devil—that they are unable to resolutely or clearly sort out good from evil and right from wrong.

Recognize that you have the *only* answer which solves all of their puzzling questions. Many are unknowingly yet anxiously waiting for you to share with them. After all, those who truly know the Creator God should know the difference between good and evil, and joyfully testify to the distinctions. Be sensitive to those pursuing answers to seemingly unsolvable questions. Know that your good works will definitely glorify your Father who is in Heaven, since He will strategically place you in positions to share the good news with those intrinsically seeking help and deliverance.

Finally, follow the advice of the Apostle Paul, as he warns the Roman Believers how to lovingly overcome evil with good, in words that almost echo the thoughts of Isaiah:

“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. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,’ says the Lord. ‘BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD’] Leviticus 19:18; Proverbs 25:21-22]. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:9-21).

Remember, two things replace evil and cover a multitude of sins. Turning a sinner away from his or her sin (James 5:20) and love (1 Peter 4:8). **Practice and perfect these actions!** Nothing more needs to be said!

Until the restoration of all things...

Tithing: What can you tell me about tithing from a Messianic perspective? How am I to honor God with my money and resources today?

FAQ???
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There are a wide variety of opinions given as to what “tithing” means, even though all of us should agree that we need to honor the Lord with our resources. One of the things that we should keep in mind is that the instructions regarding tithing in the Torah, specifically with land, produce, livestock, etc., were intended to be kept in the Land of Israel in conjunction with the priesthood and Tabernacle/Temple service. Since most of us live in the Diaspora, and there is no operative Tabernacle/Temple service today, we can only keep these commandments in principle and have to find another way to apply them.

The Book of Acts is probably the best place to start, where we see that the early Messianic community shared many of their possessions and gave money, supplies, and goods to one another as they needed them. This too, of course, would be a challenge since today’s Messianic community is spread abroad, and most of us are not in need for someone else to provide us with daily wares. Furthermore, we do not live in an economy that would largely allow for common ownership to this extent. When we see the early Messianic community growing beyond the borders of Judea we see that as congregations were established, monies were regularly collected for the expenses of the local assembly and for the traveling Apostles. Paul’s letter to the Philippians, for example, is largely written thanking them for a generous contribution that they made to his ministry work.

Today, these are all things we have to consider as we return to the Hebraic Roots of our faith and the Messianic movement continues to grow. Many people do not have local assemblies and as such do not consider it important to give a tithe. These individuals are largely served and taught by independent Messianic ministries, but sometimes do not support them financially *in any way*. Is this right? Many people feel convicted to tithe, but do not know how to do it.

We see the issue of tithing and giving offerings applied in some unique situations in the Apostolic Scriptures. We would encourage you to support those who teach and minister to you just as the Apostles did. From the Apostles’ work our faith was able to survive and last almost 2,000 years. In today’s Messianic movement, which has quite a bit going against it, there is a great deal of difficult work ahead to establish a theology and discipline that will last for future generations. People who are on the front lines in Messianic ministry need the financial support of others so they can continue the work that God has given to them. Pray to the Lord and ask Him how He would have you serve Him with your finances.

Tongues: What do you believe about speaking in tongues? What occurred on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out?

The issue about speaking in “tongues” is as much a debate in mainstream Christianity as it is in the Messianic movement. There are people in the Messianic movement today who come out of the varied charismatic movements, which frequently empha-

size the gifts of the Spirit, speaking in tongues, and other so-called “signs and wonders.” In our experience, many who come out of these backgrounds are some of the hardest to convince of Torah observance and the Messianic lifestyle, because many charismatics are of the opinion that they have “freedom in the Spirit,” yet this freedom often goes beyond what is Scripturally defined for us. We are also continually reminded of the Messiah’s warning to us, “For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce great signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, even the elect” (Matthew 24:24, NRSV).

We are certainly not of the opinion that the “gifts are dead” and that the gifts of the Holy Spirit were only available to those in the First Century. *We are continuationists*, but are also of the opinion that there has been gross misuse of the Spiritual gifts in recent years via some of the Pentecostal and charismatic groups that have popped up, and that we must return to a Scriptural foundation in what the Spiritual gifts actually are. God would not be doing a “new thing” in the world today that does not have some precedent or continuity with what is already seen in the Bible.

Speaking in “tongues,” as it is often manifested today in Christian assemblies and in some Messianic congregations, is often a person being “supernaturally empowered” to speak in some form of unintelligible gibberish. We certainly do not doubt the fact that we can be supernaturally empowered to speak in “groanings too deep for words” (Romans 8:26) or “groans that words cannot express” (NIV), as Paul calls them. But these groanings are only intended to be used when “the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us,” and these “groanings too deep for words” (NASU) **are different** than what is commonly thought to be “speaking in tongues.” These groanings could be called one’s personal prayer language with God, and only used when one has an urgent prayer to say and does not know what to say, so the Spirit takes over.

Speaking in “tongues,” as it is Biblically defined, is being supernaturally empowered to speak in an intelligible, foreign language that one does not know, or being supernaturally empowered to speak in one’s native language and being heard by others in their native language which is different. We see this occur in the Book of Acts at *Shavuot*/Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon those assembled: “And they were all filled of the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave *ability* to them to speak” (Acts 2:4, LITV). Acts 2:8 attests that those assembled said, “how do we hear each in our own dialect in which we were born?” (LITV). Those proclaiming the gospel at *Shavuot*/Pentecost not only were supernaturally empowered to speak or be heard in foreign languages, but were also speaking or being heard in the specific *regional dialects* of those assembled.

We believe that the gift of tongues is for today, but that it is not speaking in the meaningless gibberish that it is often credited as being. The Apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 14:22, “So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy *is for a sign*, not to unbelievers but to those who believe.” This is because from the example given to us in Acts, the speaking in other languages occurred so that the good news of salvation in Messiah Yeshua could be proclaimed to those who needed it. This is why speaking in “tongues,” or more correctly **languages**, is a sign for unbelievers.

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.

Honey-Wheat Challah for Shavuot

This recipe is suited to be mixed in a bread machine.

¾ cup lukewarm water
2-¼ tablespoons olive oil
3 tablespoons honey
1 teaspoon sea salt
2 eggs, beaten
2 cups whole wheat bread flour
1 cup unbleached flour
1 packet or 1-¼ teaspoons active dry yeast.

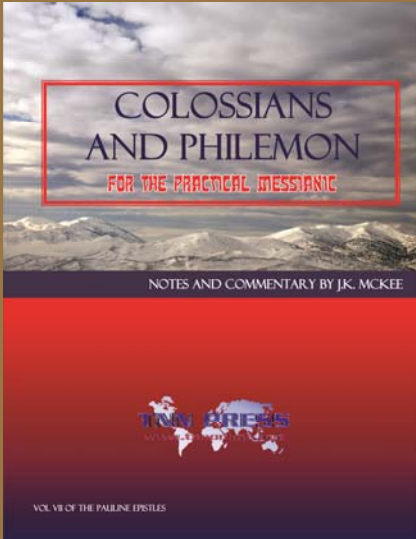
Add ingredients to bread pan in order in which they are listed. Select Dough setting on bread machine. After cycle is complete, remove dough with a rubber spatula. Place dough on floured surface. Separate into 6 equal sections and roll each into 6 same length strips. Make each strip thicker in the middle to give the bread a tapered look. Braid the strips. Let rise for 45 minutes or until doubled in size. Place on greased baking sheet or baking stone. Optional: Brush with beaten egg yolk and sprinkle on sesame seeds. Bake in a preheated oven at 350 degrees for 25-30 minutes. Yield: two small loaves for Shavuot

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



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A new commentary coming soon from TNN Press:
**COLOSSIANS AND PHILEMON
FOR THE PRACTICAL MESSIANIC**



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The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon are two of the most overlooked letters in the Apostolic Scriptures (New Testament) by today's Messianic community. Too frequently, our engagement level with Colossians is limited to words that Paul issues about Torah practices like Sabbath-keeping or kosher eating or about *something* being nailed to the cross. Because Christian friends and family often use partial quotes from Colossians to refute Messianic Believers who are Torah observant, we often try to avoid Paul's letter. And like many of today's evangelical Christians, Paul's letter to Philemon is totally avoided, simply because we do not know what to do with the issue of slavery. Ignoring these two letters cannot be allowed to continue any longer.

In the commentary *Colossians and Philemon for the Practical Messianic*, TNN Online editor J.K. McKee shows us why today's Messianic Believers need not be afraid of these two letters any more. A wide array of scholastic opinion is considered in regard to these two texts, especially the various proposals made about the false teaching that disrupted the Believers in Colossae. Contemporary applications for some negative trends being witnessed in today's Messianic movement are also proposed, especially in terms of the false philosophy and worship of angels refuted by Paul. Colossians and Philemon are both important letters for us to understand, as today's Messianic community strives to move forward in its reading of the Pauline Epistles.



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