

STATEMENT OF FAITH

updated 01 January, 2010 www.outreachisrael.net www.messianicapologetics.net

The goal and purpose of Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics is to gain a fully Biblical and Messiah-like approach toward our faith, life, and position in the world that desperately needs the good news of salvation in Messiah Yeshua (Christ Jesus).

THE BIBLE

We fully affirm that the Holy Scriptures or Bible (Genesis—Revelation) comprise the inspired, infallible Word of God as revealed in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts. We believe that it is the final authority for faith and practice (Deuteronomy 30:14-16; Psalm 103:20; 105:8; 119:11, 28, 38, 105, 133, 160, 172; Proverbs 30:5; Romans 9:28; 2 Corinthians 6:7; Ephesians 6:17; Philippians 2:16; 2 Timothy 3:16; 4:2; Hebrews 4:12; James 1:22-23; 1 Peter 1:25; 1 John 2:5, 14;).

While we certainly employ English Bible translations in our examinations of the Scriptures, these translations are subject to the theological presuppositions of their translators. We believe that a literal, or literal-free translation, is the best method of translation, as opposed to dynamic equivalence which can sometimes skew the text. Ultimately though, final authority rests with the Hebrew and Greek texts. We also affirm the importance and necessity of reading Scripture in its original historical and cultural context.

THE PLURALITY OF GOD

We affirm a belief in one Almighty God, Creator of the Universe, and that He has primarily revealed Himself to humanity in three separate, but unified co-existent manifestations: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14). We emphasize that as mortals we cannot fully comprehend the Godhead and how He chooses to manifest Himself to us, although it is evident that God is a plurality. This is clear as the Hebrew word for “God,” *Elohim*, is plural; and that He is one or *echad*, denoting a composite, **not** absolute unity.

THE MESSIAH

We fully affirm the complete Divinity of Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ), that Yeshua pre-existed the universe and created the universe (John 1:1-3; Philippians 2:5-7; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2-3), that Yeshua is to be worshipped (Mark 5:6-7; Matthew 2:2, 8, 11; Matthew 14:32-33; 28:9, 17; Luke 24:52; John 9:38; Hebrews 1:6), and even though in Yeshua’s human Incarnation the Father is greater than the Son (John 14:28), that the Son is genuinely God (John 20:28; Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 1:1). We believe that acknowledging Yeshua as LORD, meaning YHWH/YHVH, is mandatory for salvation (Romans 10:9; Philippians 2:10-11). We believe that He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18, 20, 23, 25; Luke 1:26-33), and that He is the prophesied Messiah of Israel (John 1:45).

While on Planet Earth Yeshua observed the Torah or Law of Moses perfectly (Matthew 5:17; 22:36-40) becoming our blameless Passover Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7). We believe that through His sacrifice He took away the curse of the Law, or eternal damnation, for humanity (Galatians 3:13), thus atoning for all sin. We believe that the Messiah was resurrected on the third day (Matthew 28:6-7; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:34; 2 Timothy 2:8), that He ascended into Heaven (Acts 1:9-11), is presently sitting at the right hand of the Father interceding for us (Psalm 110:1; Mark 16:19; Luke 20:42; 22:69; Acts 2:25, 33-44; 5:31; 7:55-56; Romans 8:34; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22), and is awaiting His return to rule for a thousand years from Jerusalem (Matthew 24:29-31; 26:34; Mark 12:36; 13:24-27; 14:62; Revelation 20:4; 6).

SALVATION

We affirm that salvation is a free gift of God available through acknowledging Yeshua the Messiah as Lord (Romans 10:9) through repentance and confession of sin (Luke 5:32; Acts 5:31; Romans 2:4; 10:10; 2 Corinthians 7:9-10; 2 Timothy 2:25; 2 Peter 3:9), which results in a person being born again (John 3:3, 7; 1 Peter 1:3, 23) or regenerated by an indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Salvation does not come via human action or obeying commandments (Matthew 5:20; John 1:17; Romans 2:12-13, 25; 3:20, 27; 4:14; 8:3; 10:5; Galatians 2:16, 21; 3:2, 11, 21; 5:4; 6:13; Philippians 3:9), but if one is of the faith, then he or she will have “works” (James 2:14-16). The commandments of Scripture define sin (Romans 3:31; 5:13; 6:15; 7:7-9, 12; 8:2; 10:4; Galatians 3:24; Hebrews 7:19; 10:28; James 2:9) and therefore define every person’s guilt.

While a forcefully debated theological issue, we believe that God gives each one of us a free will and choice whether to choose or reject His salvation and to serve Him (Joshua 24:15). All Believers are required to “work out” their salvation (Philippians 2:12), meaning not taking it for granted, and we should all be actively maturing in our walk of faith. We do believe that a person can lose his or her salvation (Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26-27), but that God is the only One who can make the ultimate determination regarding the eternal destiny of anyone.

We believe that those who receive Yeshua as their personal Savior will spend eternity with Him, whether in Heaven, during His Millennial reign on Planet Earth, or in the New Heavens and the New Earth.

RETRIBUTION

We fully affirm that those who do not repent of their sins and receive Yeshua will spend a conscious eternity in Hell (Deuteronomy 32:22; Job 11:8; 24:19; Psalm 116:3; Isaiah 14:9; Jonah 2:2; Luke 12:5, 16:19-31) and ultimately the Lake of Fire (Revelation 19:20; 20:10; 15). We totally disavow the belief of an annihilation of the condemned and believe that such a concept is misguided, allowing the unrighteous to experience no sustainable consequence for their sin. Hell and the Lake of Fire must constitute an ongoing, eternal punishment for the damned (Revelation 20:10), not extinction. It is possible, though, that a metaphorical view of eternal punishment more fairly deals with descriptions of both fire *and* outer darkness (cf. Matthew 8:11-12; 13:41-42; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30). This means that eternal punishment may ultimately be considered never-ending banishment, separation, and exile from the presence of the Creator.

THE TORAH

We fully recognize that Yeshua must have observed the Torah or Law of Moses contained in Genesis–Deuteronomy perfectly to be the prophesied Messiah and be sinless (Matthew 5:17; 22:36-40). We believe that through His sacrifice, the Messiah has filled the Torah with His Spirit (Matthew 5:17-20), not annulled it, and has given it greater understanding.

We do not believe that meticulous observance of the Torah is mandatory for salvation (Matthew 5:20; John 1:17; Romans 2:12-13, 25; 3:20, 27; 4:14; 8:3; 10:5; Galatians 2:21; 3:2, 11, 21; 5:4; 6:13; Philippians 3:9), but rather that it is the Torah which has defined sin for humanity (James 2:9; Romans 3:31; 5:13; 6:15; 7:7-9, 12; 8:2; 10:4; Galatians 3:24; Hebrews 7:19; 10:28). By further studying the Torah we can better understand what the Messiah died for and therefore we can enhance our spiritual walk. After salvation, via the enacting of the New Covenant in our lives, with the Holy Spirit supernaturally writing the commandments onto the heart (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27), we should want to not knowingly break God’s commandments and we should naturally be led into greater obedience (Psalm 1:2; 40:8; 119:92, 174; Romans 7:12; 8:4; 1 Timothy 1:8). The Torah forms the foundation of the entire Bible, and is necessary to understand

for properly understanding and interpreting the Prophets, Writings, and Apostolic Scriptures (New Testament). The Torah helps us to understand God's holiness and character, and thus how we too can be holy (Exodus 19:6; Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:26; Deuteronomy 7:6; 14:2; 26:19; Isaiah 8:3; 1 Peter 1:15-16).

We encourage all Believers to obey God to their furthest extent, by remembering the seventh-day Sabbath, the appointed times of Leviticus 23, and eating kosher, just to name a few things. We believe that by obeying the Torah we become part of the holy and set-apart people that the Father desires, and this sanctification will be evident in those who are truly growing and maturing in their faith.

We affirm how many Christians throughout the centuries were by no means "lawless," and have always valued the Ten Commandments, and the ethical and moral code of the Old Testament, as a standard of piety and holiness. Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics appreciate the great value of the Reformed and Wesleyan traditions found within their collective family, and do their best to focus on common agreement with these two strands of Protestantism, in explaining the value of the Messianic lifestyle to evangelical Christians. Many Christians of the past, who looked to what they considered to be the Torah's "moral law," will indeed be great in the Kingdom (Matthew 5:19). Today's Messianic movement should strive to build on the positive contributions that they have left for us.

THE NAME OF GOD

We affirm that the Almighty God of the Universe has a proper name which in Hebrew is *hwhy* or *YHWH/YHVH* (Exodus 3:15; 6:3; 1 Samuel 24:21; 2 Kings 21:4, 7; 2 Chronicles 33:4; Isaiah 42:8; 52:6; Malachi 1:11, 14), commonly rendered in most English Bibles as "the LORD." We believe that its exact pronunciation has been lost to antiquity.

In Second Temple Judaism, the verbalization of the name *YHWH* was reserved only for the high priest on *Yom Kippur* or the Day of Atonement (m.*Yoma* 6:2), and it was not used as a common name. It became common to refer to *YHWH* by terms such as the Almighty, the Power of Heaven, the Temple, the Kingdom, *HaShem* (meaning "the Name"), and the ever-common *Adonai* (Lord) or *Elohim* (God). It was considered blasphemous in Second Temple times to speak the name *YHWH*, and it was punishable by death (b.*Sanhedrin* 56a). We can find no objective evidence in the Apostolic Scriptures that the Messiah or the Apostles ever used the name *YHWH*, as these writings use the Greek terms *Kurios* (Lord) and *Theos* (God), which were employed by the Septuagint translators who rendered the Hebrew Bible into Greek approximately three centuries before *Yeshua*.

The Third Commandment tells us that we are not to bring God's name to nothingness, or use it in a profane way (Exodus 20:7; Deuteronomy 5:11). We recognize that there are many Messianics who are discovering that the God of Creation indeed has a proper name, but do not believe that we should use His name casually in respect for Jewish tradition and the fact that we do not know exactly how to say it. We believe that the name *YHWH* can be used in a scholastic sense, but should not be spoken aloud frequently. We certainly do not believe that it is necessary that one know the name *YHWH* to be saved, as the God of the Universe looks at the heart of one who is seeking salvation, not whether or not such a person knows how to pronounce His proper name correctly.

We also recognize that the Messiah was fully Hebrew in a First Century context, and that His original name was *Yeshua* (ישוע) meaning "He saves" or "Savior/Salvation" (Matthew 1:21). The Greek transliteration of *Yeshua* was *Iēsous* (Ἰησοῦς), originating with the Septuagint Rabbis, and appears as the title for the Book of Joshua in the LXX. The name *Iēsous* is the name from

which the English name Jesus is derived. **We totally reject** the concept that the Messiah's English name "Jesus Christ" is pagan because of its Greek linguistic origins. While we encourage use of the Messiah's original Hebrew name Yeshua, we recognize that many have come to faith through His English name Jesus.

THE ELECT

We affirm that there exists a universal body of Believers or *qahal/ekklēsia* (Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 10:17; 12:12-13; Ephesians 4:4). This assembly/congregation is the Commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:11-12) or Israel of God (Galatians 6:16), and is composed of physical descendants of the Biblical Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob/Israel *and* those of the nations. It includes those who are not physical descendants of Abraham, but can claim his promises through faith in Yeshua (Galatians 3:8-9, 16). We certainly believe that God's promises to Ancient Israel and the contemporary Jewish people are valid and remain in force—including the existence of the State of Israel in fulfillment of Bible prophecy (Isaiah 66:8)—but also that non-Jewish Believers by their faith in the Jewish Messiah are to be regarded as "grafted in" to Israel (Romans 11:17-18). Jewish and non-Jewish Believers in Yeshua are to constitute a "one new humanity" (Ephesians 2:12), a single community of God's chosen.

We reject the concept that God has two groups of elect: Israel and "the Church," and disavow all forms of dispensational and replacement theology. Our Heavenly Father only has one group of elect, the Israel of God, which is the *qahal/ekklēsia* and is the Body of Messiah, composed of those who have been spiritually regenerated or born again.

THE LAST DAYS

While recognizing that eschatology is not a salvation issue, we hold to eschatological views consistent with historical pre-millennialism, and we do not hold to amillennial, post-millennial, or preterist eschatology.

We believe that the Messiah will physically return to Earth following the last seven years of Tribulation more accurately called the Seventieth Week of Israel (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:21; Mark 13:19). We believe that during this final time period that a world leader known as the antichrist/antimesiah will arise (Daniel 7:15; Revelation 17:11; 17:13), will demand worship (Revelation 13:15), and will require everyone to receive his mark to conduct trade and commerce (Revelation 13:16-17). We believe that during this time period, the final judgments of God will be poured out on humanity.

We fully affirm in a gathering of the saints into the clouds to meet the Lord (Matthew 24:29-31; Mark 13:26-27; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17) and that Believers will be spared from the wrath of God (Romans 1:18; 2:5, 8; Ephesians 5:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:9; Revelation 16:1). However, we believe that the wrath of God is poured out on a literal Day of the LORD, promoting the idea of a pre-wrath/post-tribulational gathering of the elect, and that ultimately the "wrath" of God is eternal condemnation in the Lake of Fire reserved for the condemned.

HUMAN EQUALITY*

We affirm how both man and woman were made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27), and that every human being on Earth has equal dignity and value as endowed by the Creator.

* These principles are largely adapted from the document "Men, Women, and Biblical Equality" as laid forth by the organization Christians for Biblical Equality <<http://www.cbeinternational.org/?q=content/men-women-and-biblical-equality>>.

We believe that woman was created to be the helper of the man (Genesis 2:18), but as an equal caretaker of the Garden and not as a subordinate. The man's rulership over the woman came as a negative result of the Fall of humanity (Genesis 3:16), itself something that both Adam and Eve were responsible for (Genesis 3:6; Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22). The work of the gospel in transforming people is something that is completely blind to race or gender (John 1:12-13; Romans 8:14-17; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 3:26-28; Colossians 3:11).

We believe that there is a trajectory seen in the Holy Scriptures which was intended to steadily return humanity to the original state of equality as seen in the Garden. Whereas some are inclined to think that the Torah or Pentateuch upholds the ideal of patriarchy, its commandments frequently run into conflict with Ancient Near Eastern law codes where women are often portrayed as property or non-persons. The Torah treats women as persons, and does subvert the contemporary views of its original time. We agree, along with the more moderate branches of Judaism present today, that many commandments originally given to men in the Torah—and not specifically determined by sexual anatomy—can now be *halchically* extended to women. This is by no means to be considered “abolishing” the Law, but rather can be seen as a proper part of its “fulfillment” as laid forth in the teachings of Messiah Yeshua (Matthew 5:17-18) in the post-resurrection era that has dawned in Him.

We affirm that both the Tanach (Judges 4:4-14, 5:7; 2 Chronicles 34:22-28; Proverbs 31:30-31; Micah 6:4) and Apostolic Scriptures (Acts 1:14, 18:26, 21:9; Romans 16:1-7, 12-13, 15; Philippians 4:2-3; Colossians 4:15) portray men and women performing important spiritual roles together. In the post-resurrection era, the work of Messiah Yeshua has restored full equality to the genders (Galatians 3:28; cf. Colossians 3:11). Husbands and wives are to live in mutual submission to each other (Ephesians 5:21), serving one another as co-leaders of the family in rearing children (Exodus 20:12; Leviticus 19:3; Deuteronomy 6:6-9, 21:18-21, 27:16; Proverbs 1:8, 6:20; Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:20; 2 Timothy 1:5). The husband's role as the head/*kephalē* of the woman (Ephesians 5:21-33) regards him being the “source” or “origin” of the wife as Eve came from Adam, emphasizing how she is to be given the same value as he (Ephesians 5:28). While there are passages in the Apostolic Scriptures that appear to restrict women in positions of teaching or leadership (1 Corinthians 11:2-16, 14:33-36; 1 Timothy 2:9-15), these must not be interpreted simplistically but in concert with other passages that do depict women in leadership.

Our ministry will stand up for the emergence of an egalitarian Messianic movement, where both male and female Jewish and non-Jewish Believers can be welcome, and all people can be encouraged to use their gifts and talents as is fitting in the Lord. We will promote a mutual submission ideology where our shared Jewish and Christian spiritual heritages are honored and respected, and we remember how the needs of others are more important than our own (Philippians 2:3-4). We will stand against any trend that demeans not only non-Jewish Believers not being the equals of Jewish Believers in Messiah Yeshua, but also any trend that would demean women as valuable members of the Body of Messiah, capable of serving in leadership every bit as much as men.

Our ministry will also promote the usage of a moderate degree of inclusive language, which while not entirely stopping usage of male-centric terms like man, mankind, men, or brothers—will strive to use more gender-neutral terms like humanity, humankind, human beings, people, and brothers and sisters. We will also limit the usage of terms like Gentile(s) to a minimum, which can have negative overtones and undertones seen in current Jewish culture, instead employing alternatives like “nations” or “peoples.”