



OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

REACH TEACH ENCOURAGE DISCIPLE



DECEMBER 2017
**REMEMBERING BIBLICAL
AND JEWISH HOLIDAYS**

as a Messianic Believer



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STATEMENT OF BELIEF

*Outreach Israel Ministries
and Messianic Apologetics*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For a fuller Statement of Faith, consult the OIM website

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

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OIM UPDATE

December 2017

As a student of world history, coupled with years of Bible study, significant fifty-year jubilee (Leviticus 25:10-13), seventy-year, and/or centennial anniversaries, regarding Israel and particular Jerusalem, can be a compelling reminder that the Holy One is ultimately orchestrating, or at the very least, allowing the affairs of humanity to proceed with His promises fulfilled. In a unique way, keen observers can detect the handiwork of the Almighty, as distinctive mileposts litter the dusty and bloodied trails of mankind's steps and missteps down through the annals of time. Such is the case when one revisits the noteworthy actions that have taken place over the millennia regarding the place on Earth where God said He would place His name:

"But when you cross over the Jordan and settle in the land that *ADONAI* your God enables you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies around you, you will dwell in safety. **Then the place *ADONAI* your God chooses to make His Name dwell**, there you are to bring all that I command you—your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes, the offering of your hand, and all your finest vow offerings that you vow to *ADONAI*" (Deuteronomy 12:10-11, TLV).

"Since the day that I brought My people out of the land of Egypt, I did not choose a city out of all the tribes of Israel in which to build a House that My Name might be there. Nor did I choose any man to be a leader over My people Israel. **But I have chosen Jerusalem that My Name would abide there and I have chosen David to be over My people Israel**" (2 Chronicles 6:5-6, TLV).

For centuries, many faithful followers of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have viewed world affairs through a prism that reflects the uniqueness of Israel's prophesied destiny, and Jerusalem's exclusive claim to be where the Creator God has placed His Name on the globe He created. Hence, it did not escape our attention this past Summer when we celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of Jerusalem on June 7, 1967 from the Jordanians, as the Six Day War was commemorated. In fact, because this day was so significant to the State of Israel, the Israelis have an annual state recognized holiday and celebration called *Yom Yerushalayim* on the 28th of Iyyar.

In addition, this past month, on November 2, the one-hundredth anniversary of the Balfour Declaration was also remembered. Shortly thereafter, a century ago, during the final year of World War I, British General Edmund Allenby began the assault against the Ottoman Turks to capture Jerusalem. The Battle for Jerusalem began on November 17, 1917 and ended with Allenby leading his troops into Jerusalem through the Jaffa Gate on December 11, 1917. Thus this month it has been 100 years (or two jubilees) since these historic events took place. Might this be another one of the signposts regarding Israel and Jerusalem that God is making evident to Biblically astute observers?

Provisionally, this month, the President of the United States has just recognized that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel, with plans to move the American Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in the next few years. This action in and of itself is going to have untold consequences, perhaps negative and positive. However, there has been a recognizable pattern down through the centuries, when a country or people group blesses the Jewish

people. Since 1948 (seventy years ago this coming May 12, 2018) when the State of Israel was reconstituted as a sovereign nation on the land promised to Abraham and his heirs, the U.S. has been its strongest and most outspoken supporter. As a result, God's discernable blessings have flowed and ebbed, contingent upon how America responds to Israel's needs, as noted in the following passage from Genesis:

"Then *ADONAI* said to Abram, 'Get going out from your land, and from your relatives, and from your father's house, **to the land that I will show you.** My heart's desire is to make you into a great nation, to bless you, to make your name great so that you may be a blessing. **My desire is to bless those who bless you, but whoever curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed**" (Genesis 12:1-3, TLV).

We are thankful that the current leaders of our country are making declarative statements to the other nations of the world that at the very least, they are cognizant of what the Holy Scriptures state and want to support the right of the Jewish people to maintain their existence in the Land promised to them millennia ago. As a result, I believe the promised blessings to our country will be obvious to all with the eyes to see and the ears to hear. May we all pray to that end!

This month continues our ongoing series of articles on The Messianic Walk. J.K. McKee has written an importance piece, entitled, "**Remembering Biblical and Jewish Holidays as a Messianic Believer.**" It goes through the weekly and annual cycle of the appointed times, how they are often approached by Jewish Believers who have come to faith in Israel's Messiah, and by non-Jewish Believers called into the Messianic movement and embracing their Hebraic and Jewish Roots. You will be blessed, as we discuss both our family's experience, from an evangelical Protestant background, in becoming Messianic—but also our experience in serving in congregational leadership, in common cause and unity with our Jewish brothers and sisters in Yeshua.

We want to especially thank those of you who have faithfully supported our efforts over the years! We continue to need your financial support in order to dedicate the time and energy required to continue in the work that the Lord has assigned us. We particularly need many of you to sign up for a regular monthly contribution via PayPal at www.outreachisrael.net. **We thank you for your 2017 year-end giving!**

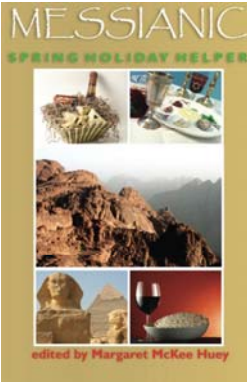
Finally, as we approach *Chanukah* this month, we want you to take advantage of our ministry's *Messianic Winter Holiday Helper* publication, giving copies of this book to family and friends and your home congregational libraries. Each of us needs a more complete understanding of Winter holiday commemorations—especially so we can alleviate unnecessary tensions with those who are doing some less-than-Biblical things. *Chag Sameach Chanukah!*

Blessings, Mark Huey



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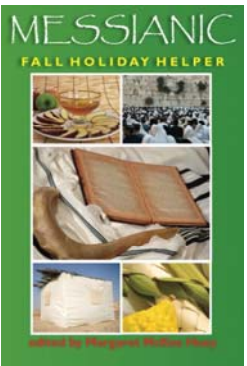
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MESSIANIC SPRING HOLIDAY HELPER

The *Messianic Spring Holiday Helper* is a valuable compilation of resources designed to assist you, your family, and your Messianic fellowship for this season. We have included a wide selection of articles discussing the different salvation historical themes from the Spring season. The significance of *Purim* is addressed. The role that the Passover and the Exodus play, and how they relate to our redemption in the Messiah, is described. We go into great detail discussing the Last Supper, and the death and resurrection of the Messiah. We consider what it means to observe *Shavuot* as a time for both the giving of the Torah (Law) and the Holy Spirit. We offer a fair-minded and loving way to communicate to those who observe an Easter holiday often separated from anything in the Tanach or Old Testament. A selection of FAQs on the Spring holidays has been provided, as are some delicious recipes, and an educational Passover *haggadah* you can use for your home or congregation.

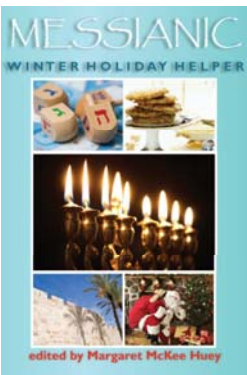
\$21.99 B111P 338 pages paperback
\$9.99 eBook for Amazon Kindle



MESSIANIC FALL HOLIDAY HELPER

The *Messianic Fall Holiday Helper* is a valuable compilation of resources designed to assist you, your family, and your Messianic fellowship for this season. We have included a selection of articles summarizing the role of mainline Jewish tradition, and reflective articles that focus on day-to-day observances of the Ten Days of Awe and the eight days of Tabernacles. Messages from customary books of the Tanach (Old Testament) like Deuteronomy and Ecclesiastes, which are often studied and discussed during the Fall high holidays, have been offered. A few FAQs on the Fall high holidays have also been provided. Finally, some significant liturgy derived from Conservative Jewish sources—including a template for both a *Rosh HaShanah* and *Yom Kippur* morning service—is available.

\$17.99 B112P 256 pages paperback
\$9.99 eBook for Amazon Kindle



MESSIANIC WINTER HOLIDAY HELPER

The *Messianic Winter Holiday Helper* is a valuable compilation of resources designed to assist you, your family, and your Messianic fellowship for this season. We have included a selection of articles summarizing the holiday of Christmas, and how Messianic Believers need to have a proper attitude toward our Christian brothers and sisters. We have included a variety of teachings on *Chanukah*, common traditions associated with it, and how this can be a blessed time of spiritually rededicating ourselves to God and to each other. Information on the time period of the Maccabees in Second Century B.C.E. Judea, the wars that they fought, and the long term impact they left on subsequent generations, has been provided. A few FAQs on the Winter holidays are offered, as are some delicious recipes, and liturgy you can recite for your *Chanukah* celebration.

\$16.99 B108P 220 pages paperback
\$9.99 eBook for Amazon Kindle

REMEMBERING BIBLICAL AND JEWISH HOLIDAYS

as a Messianic Believer

by J.K. McKee

Each of us tends to be a person of habit, and there are ongoing daily, weekly, and annual cycles which tend to give focus and meaning to our lives. Certain days appear on the calendar which have importance to us. We may look forward on a certain day each week, to eat at a particular restaurant having a special. We may look forward to the weekend, to simply relax and not work. We may look forward to a birthday, an anniversary, or a day when something extremely important took place in our individual or family's lives.

People in today's Messianic movement have a different life cycle, than those many others who claim faith in Israel's Messiah. While we have our birthdays and anniversaries like other people—the Jewish and non-Jewish Believers who compose today's Messianic community, follow a different cycle throughout the week and throughout the year. For many Jewish Believers in Yeshua, being a part of the Messianic movement has been a **significant lifeline**, especially given the past history of many Jewish Believers who had become part of Christianity. Only until the past century or so, it was normative for Jewish Believers to assimilate into non-Jewish Christianity, its religious holidays, its customs, and for the children of Jewish Believers to quickly forget about their Jewish heritage. *After all, it was thought that being Jewish and receiving Jesus meant that one became a Christian and stopped being a Jew.* Today, with the Messianic Jewish movement, this is thankfully no longer the case. Not only it is a very Jewish thing to believe in Yeshua as Israel's Messiah—but it is entirely acceptable to do Jewish things like remembering *Shabbat*, the festivals of the Torah, and the historical commemorations of the Jewish people.

A significant number of the non-Jewish Believers, whom God has specially called into the Messianic movement at this point in time, have often been led by Him to remember Yeshua in the Biblical feasts. A passage like Colossians 2:17, which speaks of how the appointed times have shadows of the substance of the Messiah, and how various Torah instructions portray elements of His redemptive work, really speak to the hearts and minds of non-Jewish Believers. These are people who want to live more like Yeshua and His Disciples, recognizing themselves as "fellow-citizens with God's people and members of God's family" (Ephesians 2:19, CJB/CJSB). As followers of Israel's God and Israel's Messiah, *and* as a part of the Commonwealth of

Israel (Ephesians 2:11-13), what God has specified for His people and what He has done in the history of Israel, bears supernatural importance.

What does it mean for today's Messianic people to regularly remember the Biblical appointed times and holidays in Scripture, as well as various commemorations from Jewish history and tradition? Many Jewish Believers see a magnanimous fulfillment of these things, wondering how their ancestors and family members continue to miss the Messiah. Many non-Jewish Believers feel that they had been robbed from past spiritual experiences, which did not include the appointed times of Leviticus 23 and other remembrances, and they can run into significant conflicts with their family and friends over why they are not necessarily observing previous engagements any more.

The Weekly Shabbat

For many Jewish homes, especially more religiously observant ones, the work week culminates in the remembrance of the weekly Sabbath or *Shabbat*. The *Erev Shabbat* family dinner is a huge centerpiece in the Jewish community, so much so that many non-religious Jews still think it is important to light candles, break *challah*, recite blessings, sing songs, and gather around the table together. For those who are followers of Israel's God, the *Erev Shabbat* meal is important for maintaining the relationship between not only family members, but also with the larger Jewish community and with its God. This of course is carried over into the actual Sabbath day, frequently with morning services held at one's local synagogue or temple, including traditional liturgy, Hebrew canting from the Torah, and a message that is typically delivered from the weekly Torah portion.

The Messianic Jewish *Shabbat* experience, while varied, does rightly incorporate a great number of the edifying traditions witnessed in the Synagogue. It is important that families get together once a week, and share a meal. It is vital that we all come together corporately in worship. And as Messianic Jews remember traditional prayers and customs, sometimes from their own childhood—Yeshua the Messiah being the center of the *Shabbat* rest, and identifying a number of the Jewish Sabbath traditions originating during Second Temple times, brings great joy and elation to them.

Non-Jewish Believers in the Messianic movement, observing *Shabbat*, is frequently a sight to behold. Many eagerly embrace *Shabbat* and its theme of rest—**because they know that all human beings need rest!** Admittedly for some, attending *Shabbat* services is little more than going to "Saturday church." Yet, for many others, their introduction to *Shabbat* may have begun when a Messianic Jewish friend invited them into their homes for an

Erev Shabbat dinner, and then they got hooked. Others, per the theological traditions of their Protestant heritage, may have looked at Sunday as a proper Sabbath day, including a prohibition on conducting in commerce, but appreciate that they now have embraced *Shabbat* with the fullness and richness that is seen in Judaism.

The Fall High Holidays

Jewish people of generally all varieties, take some notice of the high holidays of *Rosh HaShanah* and *Yom Kippur*. For the observant, the time period leading up to and around these days is most vital, to make sure that any sins or errors of the previous year, and faults committed against others, are resolved. *Rosh HaShanah* and *Yom Kippur* are times, for religious Jews, where they believe that God is indeed looking at their hearts, and actively determining where they stand before Him. It is a very serious time for prayer, contemplation, and entreating the Lord for His mercy. Jewish people, who are nominally or non-religious, still tend to make an effort to attend some synagogue service for one or both holidays.

People in the Messianic community, because of affirming Yeshua of Nazareth as the prophesied Redeemer of Israel—while surely admiring customary Jewish approaches to *Rosh HaShanah* and *Yom Kippur*—have a much different orientation toward these two high holidays, **precisely because we believe that He has been sacrificed for our sins**. While it is useful and appropriate that we all try to make amends for the errors we have committed toward our neighbors, and come in corporate confession and repentance as congregations and assemblies—we do not sit in a service, with some angst hanging over us about our sins not being fully taken care of. Instead, we come together in praise of what the Lord has done for us, and we entreat Him for the salvation of Israel and the world. This is especially appropriate, given how many conclude that on a future Feast of Trumpets and Day of Atonement will be significant events to take place in association with the return of the Messiah to Planet Earth, and the defeat of His enemies.

Following the high holidays of *Rosh HaShanah* and *Yom Kippur* is the eight-day Feast of Tabernacles or *Sukkot*. Traditionally in the Diaspora Jewish community, a *sukkah* or tabernacle is constructed in one's back yard or at one's synagogue, where families will often spend time for meals, and invite their friends for socializing. This is also the frequent way *Sukkot* is observed in the Diaspora Messianic Jewish community, although congregations can make *Sukkot* a time where there are special teachings or special functions to attract a larger audience. In North America, at least, the Feast of Tabernacles does tend to take place within the Fall, corresponding to vari-

ous harvest themed activities that one may encounter in the local community.

The Fall holidays of the Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles tend to be a major season when Messianic Jewish congregations make a considerable effort to reach out to the larger Jewish community with the good news. Messianic Jewish congregations often advertise to the Jewish people in their city—especially those who may only tend to visit a synagogue once or twice a year—that their congregation not only has *Rosh HaShanah* or *Yom Kippur* services, but that they are free! In many Jewish synagogues, members have to actually *pay* for their seats—yet Messianic congregations have been especially set up for Jewish non-Believers to come, visit, and be presented with the good news of Israel’s Messiah.

Non-Jewish Believers, whom God has directed into the Messianic movement, tend to have different approaches, or even reactions, to the Fall holidays. Many simply appreciate the reverence, traditional prayers and liturgy, and overall seriousness of *Rosh HaShanah* and *Yom Kippur*. Focusing on one’s individual and corporate standing before God and others is actually therapeutic. And certainly, praying that the Jewish people come to faith in Yeshua, and that the world can experience *shalom*, is also most vital. At the same time, just as Messianic congregations can have a “flood” of Jewish visitors for *Rosh HaShanah* and *Yom Kippur*, there can also be many Christian visitors. But, rather than focus on some of the holy themes and prayers of these high holidays, these people tend to rather be focused on being present for what they think might be the season for “the rapture.” Unfortunately, their interest is not so much on entreating the Lord for His mercy toward the unsaved, and His concern that His people be accomplishing His Kingdom purposes.

Most Messianic Jewish congregations holding *Sukkot* activities do something similar to what is witnessed in the mainstream Synagogue. They are likely to have a *sukkah* on the congregational property, and they may have some event or major gathering open to the public—which more than anything else gives the congregation significant exposure. A number of congregations and/or Messianic ministries will hold various week-long retreats at a rural campground. (More frequently than not, this is a feature of the independent Hebrew/Hebraic Roots movement.) It can be witnessed that attendance at one’s Messianic congregation might be down, because people are off attending some *Sukkot* function. Regardless of how *Sukkot* is remembered by your local assembly, make sure that it is a welcoming time, where people notice the presence of the *sukkah*, they can fellowship, worship the Lord, and truly experience community.

The Winter Holidays

The Winter holiday season is frequently a very tense time of the year, for people within the broad Messianic movement. A definite feature of the Jewish experience, during the month of December, is remembering the holiday of *Chanukah*, the Feast of Dedication. The events involving *Chanukah* are mainly recorded in the Apocryphal Books of 1-2 Maccabees, as it involved the resistance of the Jewish people against the Seleucid Greeks—who wanted to see them give up their Torah way of life and assimilate into Greek polytheism—and the subsequent rededication of the Temple after their defeat. In much of the Jewish tradition, the festival of *Chanukah* is a time when families gather to light the *menorah*, they eat special foods (often fried), and it is a time to demonstrate good will and happiness toward one another, often with the giving of gifts.

Messianic Jewish congregations observing *Chanukah*, often transfer over much of the Synagogue communal experience, although as the *menorah* is lit, Yeshua the Messiah will be emphasized to be the Light of the Word. Messianic teachings during *Chanukah* do appreciably tend to focus more on the historical record of the Second Century B.C.E. Maccabean crisis, the Books of Maccabees, various prophecies of Daniel, and actually what can be learned from the Maccabees' resistance not only to apostasy from the God of Israel—but how there are vital connections to be made to the end-times, the future rise of the beast, and how Believers in Yeshua need to resist apostasy. And, for our overall Biblical Studies, it does tend to be discussed how the First Century Jewish Believers were affected by the social fallout of the Maccabean crisis, as it did play a role in some of the tensions that erupted between the Jewish, Greek, and Roman Believers, as the good news spread out into the Mediterranean. Overall, Messianic Believers tend to learn new things about how relevant the story of *Chanukah* actually is for our contemporary lives as Messiah followers today.

Huge controversies can and do erupt during the month of December, regarding how Messianic people are to approach the Christian holiday of Christmas, on December 25. Many Messianic Jews simply do not see Christmas as something Jewish, they do not see it as something for them, but if Christians observe it, they are not going to oppose them. Many Messianic people, particularly intermarried couples often keep both *Chanukah* and Christmas. Many other Messianic people, oppose Christmas, although for different reasons and with different levels of opposition. Some of this may simply come from December 25 not being a specified holiday in the Bible, or established by the Apostles. Others see Christmas on December 25 as a clear result of syncretism practiced by Christians of the Second-Fourth Cen-

turies, where pagan holidays were reinterpreted and “Christianized” with Biblical themes. Many see Christmas on December 25 as outright paganism, Christmas trees directly prohibited in Scripture (i.e., Jeremiah 10:2-5), and most Christians serving the Kingdom of Darkness. And, a few others, noting some early opposition to Christmas by a number of the Protestant Reformers, see Christmas on December 25 as a symbol of corrupt Roman popery. *Those who hold to all of these positions are likely to be found at your local Messianic congregation during the month of December.*

All of us should be mature enough as adults to recognize that during the month of December, due to all of the nativity scenes and different Christmas carols, that more people are going to be presented with hearing about Jesus and some form of the gospel, than at any other time during the year. In spite of many of the questionable practices and origins surrounding Christmas, God has brought people to Himself during this time of year. Yet Messianic people should also be wise enough to recognize that the Savior declared today during the month of December, is broadly not the Messiah of Israel, who is returning to reign over Planet Earth from Jerusalem—but is instead a universal Christ of tolerance (for human sin). While many sincere Christian people have honored God in ignorance on December 25, Christmas on December 25 is not a God-honoring activity. Still, Messianic Believers who may observe *Chanukah*, do not need to be odious to Christian people during this time, creating unnecessary scenes. Wishing “Happy Holidays” when being told “Merry Christmas,” is entirely legitimate.

The Spring Holidays

Usually as the Winter is closing, or as early Spring begins, in North America, the Jewish community remembers *Purim* or the Feast of Lots. The main focus of *Purim* is to recall the events of the Book of Esther, and how God used individuals like Esther and Mordecai, to bring about His deliverance of the Jewish people from certain annihilation. The Messianic Jewish movement remembers *Purim* via many of the same customs and traditions as the Synagogue, and tends to rightfully use it as a time to focus on not only the necessary deliverance of the Jews—for without the Jews there would be no Messiah Yeshua—but also how we can stand against anti-Semitism in our own day.

Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread, where the deliverance from Ancient Israel from Egypt, the ten plagues, and the centerpiece of the lamb are recalled—is **one of the most important features of anyone’s reading of the Bible.** The significance that the Exodus story has had, not just in controlling redemptive and salvation themes throughout Holy Scrip-

ture, the self-identity of the Jewish people throughout history, but also many political and reforming movements in history, *is quite staggering*. Without appreciating the Passover and the Exodus, one is very much likely to not understand salvation history.

Within the broad Jewish tradition, extending back to Second Temple times, the story of the Passover has been remembered via the Passover *seder* meal. This mainly involves a retelling of the Exodus, the ten plagues upon Egypt, and incorporates the elements of unleavened bread, wine, and bitter herbs. The Passover *seder* has definitely been adapted throughout many centuries of Jewish history, often for the unique needs of diverse Jewish communities throughout the Diaspora. **The Passover account alone should be compelling for all followers of the God of Israel.** Yet, today's Messianic Jewish movement has extended considerable efforts from its beginning, to make clear connections between the ancient Passover *seder* and the Last Supper meal held between Yeshua and His Disciples, before His sacrifice as the Lamb of God. The Last Supper was a Passover *seder*, although a very unique one, as the Disciples were being prepared to see their Lord executed in atonement for the sins of Israel, and indeed, all of humanity.

The Passover season is a significant time for the broad Messianic community, not only because of the critical need for us to rejoice in the sacrifice and resurrection of the Messiah—but **because more people get exposed to the Messianic movement during Passover, than at any other time.** While Messianic families, or groups of families, tend to often hold home Passover *seder* meals—inviting many guests—Messianic congregations tend to especially be keen on having a large communal Passover meal, sometime during the week of Unleavened Bread. This is often used as a dual-outreach, first to the Jewish community, as there are many non-religious Jewish people who can especially be reached with the good news during this time—knowing that Passover is, at least, a part of their cultural heritage. Secondly, evangelical Protestant interest in the Passover, has also been quite high over the past few decades. Wanting to understand the Last Supper as an actual Passover *seder*, as something that Yeshua did and should still be remembered (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:7), has drawn many evangelical people into the Messianic movement, embracing their Hebraic and Jewish Roots.

Some tension can erupt in the Spring, over the approach that the Messianic movement has regarding the Christian Easter Sunday. **Messianic people absolutely must affirm the centrality of the death, burial, and resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah to our faith!** Yet, there is considerable discussion and debate, even among evangelical Protestants, regarding the origins of the term "Easter." Some think it comes from the Babylonian god-

dess Ishtar, others from the Teutonic Eostre. This is why in some churches, the terminology Resurrection Sunday has been employed. And thankfully for many evangelical Believers, their Resurrection Sunday is precisely about the resurrection of Yeshua, and not about the Easter Bunny or Easter eggs. Some people in the Messianic community can cause a scene with various Christian people, over their observance of Easter. At the same time, other Messianic people properly integrate a remembrance of Yeshua's death, burial, and resurrection into their home and congregational Passover activities.

During the season of Unleavened Bread, a seven-week or fifty-day period called the Counting of the Omer begins, which leads up to *Shavuot* or the Feast of Weeks, Pentecost. For Ancient Israel in the Torah, the Feast of Weeks was originally an early harvest festival, but became quickly associated with the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai. It was a key pilgrimage festival, noted in the First Century as being the time when the Holy Spirit was poured out (Acts 2). There are varied customs and traditions regarding how *Shavuot* is remembered, which can involve all-night readings of the Book of Ruth, and special teachings from the Mishnah tractate *Pirkei Avot* or Sayings of the Fathers. In the Synagogue today, *Shavuot* is a relatively minor festival, but in Messianic settings, the equal giving of both God's Torah and God's Holy Spirit, tends to be the focus of one's commemoration.

Indeed, when one factors in the storyline from Passover to *Shavuot*, today's Messianic Believers are presented with all of the key components of a person's salvation. (1) Men and women are saved from their bondage to slavery via the blood of Yeshua the Lamb, just as Ancient Israel was saved from its bondage to Egyptian servitude via the original Passover lambs. (2) Believers in Israel's Messiah are immersed in water, reminiscent of the Israelites led through the parting of the Red Sea. (3) Believers in Israel's Messiah are to receive His charge for living lives of holiness and obedience, just as Ancient Israel was brought to Mount Sinai to be formally given the Torah. And (4) followers of Israel's Messiah are to enter into His purpose, accomplishing the tasks of the Kingdom of Heaven, similar to how the Israelites were being prepared to enter into the Promised Land.

Remembering Biblical and Jewish Holidays

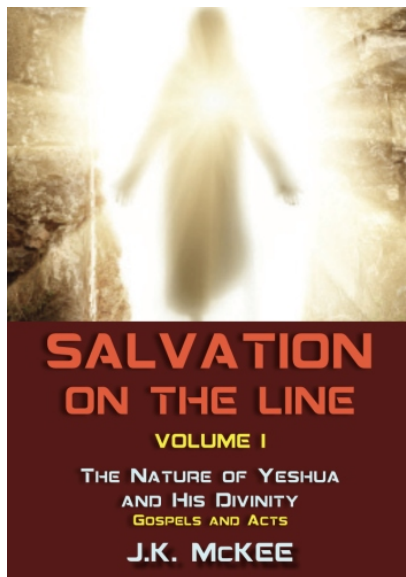
To any Messianic Jewish family, it is essential and imperative that the Biblical and Jewish holidays be observed. History is replete with too many examples, that when Torah institutions such as *Shabbat*, Passover, or *Yom Kippur* are overlooked or not remembered, among others, that Jewish people have a tendency to quickly forget their identity. The Hebrew Christian movement of the early Twentieth Century did not do a good job at empha-

sizing both the cultural *and* Biblical responsibility that Jewish Believers have to remember the appointed times. Even today, when Messianic Believers, think that it is acceptable to keep both *Chanukah* and Christmas, two opposing messages are affirmed. The Festival of Dedication has a theme of resisting assimilation to the world and its ways, whereas the syncretistic holiday of Christmas communicates that it is acceptable to take the ways of the world and “reinvent” them with Biblical themes.

Non-Jewish Believers have been entering into the Messianic community, in substantial numbers, since the 1990s—with the Biblical and Jewish holidays a significant magnet for them doing so. They often conclude that a short Sunday Church service, Christmas on December 25, and Easter Sunday, are spiritually anemic and not able to fulfill all of their needs. A weekly *Shabbat* rest, the appointed times of Leviticus 23, and edifying extra-Biblical commemorations from Jewish history are found to be very inviting! While there might be some good memories which linger, at times, of past family experiences—the future is embraced as one which not only ministers to the human soul on many more levels, but where one can have the genuine assurance of knowing that you are doing something that Yeshua (Jesus) did!

People being who they are, it has to be recognized that there can be a tendency to think of oneself as being a bit superior, as a Messianic Believer, involved with *more Biblical* things on a weekly and annual basis—whereas most of the worldwide Body of Messiah, at present, could not care that much about them. Proverbs 16:18 does need to remind some of us, “Pride *goeth* before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (KJV). Many who should be considering the value of the Biblical and Jewish holidays—be it Jewish Believers who have come to faith in Israel’s Messiah, perhaps re-discovering lost or forgotten parts of their family heritage, and non-Jewish Believers just now considering their spiritual heritage in the Tanach (Old Testament)—can find themselves turned off or even repelled, **if we do not have the right attitude.**

All of us can, for certain, have an edifying orientation when it comes to either the Sabbath, appointed times, or various extra-Biblical Jewish holidays. When Jewish people who need Yeshua, or evangelical Believers who need to grasp a hold of their Hebraic and Jewish Roots, **see us**—are they attracted to us, because they want to be a part of a loving and Spirit-filled community of Messiah followers fulfilling God’s tasks in the Earth? Do they feel genuinely welcomed and accepted by us, as they are wooed by the Lord to join with us, experiencing great blessings, and being part of the great things that He has in store for the Messianic movement in the days ahead? Do we, in our remembrance of these various holidays, actually live forth their substance in our lives of faith in Israel’s Messiah?



NEW
SALVATION ON
THE LINE VOLUME I
THE NATURE OF YESHUA
AND HIS DIVINITY
GOSPELS AND ACTS

In the past, the big issue which has faced the Messianic movement has understandably been the Messiahship of Yeshua of Nazareth, widely connected to the purposes of Jewish evangelism. *For the present*, the big issue which is staring right at the broad Messianic movement—to which no congregation, fellowship, family, or individual is entirely immune—is how to approach the nature of Yeshua (Jesus). **Is Yeshua the Messiah God, or is He a created being?** While many affirm Yeshua of Nazareth to be the eternal, uncreated Son of God who is indeed God—there are many others who express various levels of doubt about this, and

then others who think that Yeshua is a created being and not God. There are those who will affirm that Yeshua is a supernatural being to be sure—perhaps even the first created being in the cosmic order, pre-existent of our known universe—but nevertheless created and not God.

This publication, *Salvation on the Line: The Nature of Yeshua and His Divinity*, affirms a high Christology. Not only does it affirm a high Christology of Yeshua being God, it very much defends the view that while understanding all of the intricacies of Yeshua being God is not required for salvation, recognizing Yeshua as the Lord (YHWH/YHVH) of the Tanach Scriptures (Old Testament) **most certainly is required for salvation** (Romans 10:9, 13; cf. Joel 2:32).

This resource has consulted and engaged with a wide array of resources and perspectives across the Messianic movement, into the more independent sectors of the Hebrew/Hebraic Roots movement, the views expressed by various Christians labeling themselves “Biblical Unitarians,” and even those few theologians of note who hold to a low Christology. This involves an array of articles, books, commentaries, and even a few Bible versions. Most importantly, this would involve some of the excellent, thorough, and readable resources defending a high Christology, seen within the realm of broadly evangelical Christian theology.

The considerable bulk of *Salvation on the Line*, while defending a high Christology, is necessarily spent going to the text of the Holy Scriptures (Genesis-Revelation). This is not only because the Holy Scriptures are to be decisively regarded by God’s people to be the Word of Life, but also because this is the venue where the rise and fall of theological concepts are to be found. None of us wants to be found holding to a view of Yeshua being God simply because of some kind of fundamentalist dogma—where if we hold to a different view our name will somehow end up on a list or in a white paper as being stigmatized as some kind of “cultists.” We want to be found holding to a view of Yeshua being God, precisely because that is where the witness of Scripture directs us, it is the genuine testimony of the Messiah and His early followers, **and because it is required for our redemption from sins as fallen human beings**. The author firmly believes that such a principled case can be made in going to the text of Scripture, and that those who hold to a low Christology are decisively lacking in many areas.

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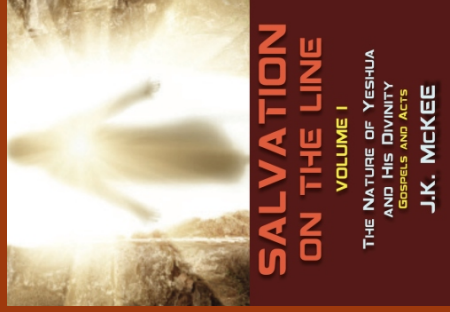
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