

OIM UPDATE

August 2013

The reality of the searing heat in Texas during the month of August has arrived right on schedule without any reservations! However, there is the added reminder for followers of Yeshua the Messiah, that after the growing season ends, the Fall feasts of the Lord are on the near horizon. On the Hebrew calendar this usually means that the prayerful day spent fasting for the Ninth of Av has come and gone—thankfully once again, without any serious or monumental problems erupting in Israel or among the children of God. Now this month, with the commencement of the first day of the month of Elul, the forty days known as the season of *teshuvah* or return to the Lord begins. From the first of Elul through *Yom Teruah/Rosh HaShanah*, then through the Ten Days of Awe to the commemoration of *Yom Kippur* on the tenth of Tishri, many Jewish and non-Jewish followers of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—around the world—will be taking the time to personally come before the Lord in a genuine spirit of confession and repentance. For more detailed information about all of these appointed times, and associated traditions and customs, be sure that you get a copy of the *Messianic Fall Holiday Helper* by TNN Press!

But many, who do **not** yet know Yeshua as the Messiah of Israel, will still be approaching the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*) with fear and trepidation about their relationship with the Almighty One. They will **not yet** by faith have confidence in the blood atonement offered by the sacrifice of Yeshua at Golgotha (Calvary). So may we all, in our prayers, intercede for the salvation of those people from all nations—but specifically the Jewish people—who have not yet received the free gift of redemption offered by His shed blood (Romans 5, 6). On the other hand, we praise the Lord that the discipline to return to the Lord, at these times throughout the year, has been incorporated by many in the ever-expanding Messianic community of faith, as **a sure means to grow in their walk of faith**, and demonstrate good works:

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Messiah Yeshua for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Because our family was introduced to the Hebraic Roots of our faith almost two decades ago via Messianic Judaism, the blessing of dedicating specific times throughout the year to commemorate the feasts of the Lord, and other associated Biblical and historical events, is now a part of our seasonal worship and prayer. It has been our family’s heartfelt commission to write and publish on how these specific times and the methods employed, can be used by the Lord to mature all men and women of faith, who compose the contemporary Messianic movement, for the work of service unto Him. With this solemn responsibility to share what we have learned from years of studying the Scriptures, and the experiences we have had in ministry, this month’s lead article is reproduced from the forthcom-

ing *Messianic Torah Helper*, a publication which has been in production for over three years, and is now finally ready in rough draft, for release in the next few months. Margaret McKee Huey and J.K. McKee have composed a critical message in, “**The Significance of the Messiah Event.**” This includes a summary of a number of family discussions that we have had over the years, which deal with the centrality of Yeshua the Messiah to our faith. In many sectors of the broad Messianic movement, there is an over-emphasis witnessed on the Torah—to the relative disregard of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Messiah. Hopefully, this overview will refocus many of our readers on the crucial importance of recognizing Yeshua and His sacrifice, as the most important event in human history.

We want to surely thank everyone who has been contributing to the **Theological Defense Trust** and the **OIM Prison Ministry Free Book Fund**. We continue to get inundated with requests for free books, and know that the Father is pleased with the effort made to produce these materials and what He is accomplishing in many hearts, through these publications.

In closing, “May the Lord bless you and keep you, and may He make His face to shine on you, and be gracious to you, and may He lift up His countenance to you, and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26).

Advancing His Kingdom, until the restoration of all things...
Mark Huey

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MESSIAH EVENT

by Margaret McKee Huey and J.K. McKee

“[B]ut now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Hebrews 9:26).

If you were to ask a great number of contemporary Messianic people—especially various individuals within the One Torah/One Law sub-movement—what the most important event in human history has been, you are probably going to be told that it was **the giving of the Torah to Ancient Israel on Mount Sinai**. There is no doubting to be sure, that the Exodus of the Ancient Israelites from Egypt, the giving of the Ten Commandments, and the codification of the Torah or Pentateuch, is absolutely imperative to understand and appreciate Biblical history and God’s plan of redemption for humanity. Up until the First Century C.E., the Exodus and the giving of the Torah was, without question, the most important event in human history.¹ Yet as Paul would say in Romans 3:21, “now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets.” Previously, God’s righteous vindication had been principally seen in the event of the deliverance of His people via the Exodus—but later His righteousness would be seen in an event quite distinct from the recorded history of the Torah, **but something most imperatively testified to come by the witness and typologies of the Torah and Prophets.**

Given the significance of the Exodus of Ancient Israel and the giving of the Torah, for much of the Biblical narrative of both the Tanach *and* Apostolic Scriptures—is there at all an event in human history which can exceed its importance? Yes! Romans 3:22 further speaks of “*the* righteousness of God through faith in Yeshua the Messiah for all those who believe.” If the genitive clause (case indicating possession) *pisteōs Iēsou Christou* (πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) is taken as a subjective genitive, then the verse reads as “*the* righteousness of God through the faithfulness of Yeshua the Messiah for all those who believe,” as **the faithfulness of Yeshua the Messiah** should be taken to represent His obedience to the Father unto death, to provide permanent atonement for the sin of all human beings.²

Outreach Israel Ministries and TNN Online have always held to the truth that the most important event in human history is **the death, burial, and resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah**. The significance of the Messiah event is imperative for each of us to contemplate, because without it we would have no permanent atonement and forgiveness available for our sins. The Messiah event is to be

¹ Consult the article “The Message of Exodus” by J.K. McKee, appearing in the *Messianic Spring Holiday Helper*.

² The technical Greek issues regarding Galatians 2:16; 3:21-22; Romans 3:21-22; Philippians 3:8-9; Ephesians 3:11-12 have been examined in the article “The Faithfulness of Yeshua the Messiah,” appearing in *The New Testament Validates Torah* by J.K. McKee.

what decisively defines us as men and women who have acknowledged Yeshua (Jesus) as our Redeemer and King. This reality is to be what we recognize as the climax of salvation history, to perhaps be *only* surpassed by the future arrival of the Eternal State itself.³

It is sorry to have to say this, but the importance of the Messiah event has, over the years, been most difficult to focus the attention of many contemporary Messianic individuals upon. In much of today's Messianic community, many people have adopted an unbridled enthusiasm and zeal for the Torah. While on the one hand, it is to be *absolutely lauded* that both Jewish and non-Jewish Believers will find themselves every week, considering the foundational instructions of Moses' Teaching—it is to be *widely lamented* when one's daily and weekly spiritual regimen is focused almost exclusively on the Pentateuch. The problem we have to seriously confront, is not with people studying the weekly Torah portions and being concerned with a greater and more targeted obedience to God; the problem is when the Torah becomes more important than the One who saved us from our sins, and the unique work that He has accomplished for us. Make no mistake about it: for many Messianic people, the Torah or Law of Moses is more important than the Messiah. The significance of the Messiah event, for evaluating salvation history and the plan of God, can be a distant afterthought or an overlooked footnote.

For many people, especially non-Jewish Messianics from evangelical Christian backgrounds, experiencing a spiritual season where there can be an over-emphasis upon the Torah, or Pentateuch, can be a bit understandable. After all, many Christians who enter into the Messianic movement have a spirituality that is devoid of anything "Old Testament." But, if in their acclimation to their Hebraic Roots, and in getting acquainted with God's Torah—there is no delicate balance with, or appreciation of, the rest of the Scriptures—the spirituality of such people can still remain lopsided. Unfortunately, much blame can be placed at the feet of those who facilitate many independent "Torah studies," and who have not aided new Messianic people sufficiently enough in maintaining Yeshua the Messiah at the center of their faith. At the same time, more admonition can be placed upon various leaders and Torah teachers, who have not adequately taken the time—or even thought it necessary—to consider the theological and spiritual gravity of the Messiah event.

It is absolutely true that Yeshua Himself explicitly stated that He did not come to abolish the Torah or Prophets, but to fulfill them (Matthew 5:17). *Every Messianic person we know believes that Yeshua did not abolish the Law of Moses, and that it remains valid instruction for Believers today.* Such fulfillment does not only involve the completion of various Tanach prophecies regarding the Messiah's arrival on the stage of human history, but also involves Yeshua's own teachings and example which bring greater dimension, depth, and application to the Torah.⁴

³ Be sure to have read the article "The Last Sedar and Yeshua's Passover Chronology" by J.K. McKee, appearing in the *Messianic Spring Holiday Helper*, for a review of the events surrounding Yeshua's death, burial, and resurrection.

Many useful thoughts and reflections are also offered by Derek Tidball, *The Message of the Cross* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001).

To their credit, there are various Protestant Christian traditions which have always adhered to the (presumed) moral and ethical commandments of the Law as having validity for all people of all generations, and they have a widespread legacy of good works of kindness and mercy associated with them (cf. James 1:27). They have only considered things like the seventh-day Sabbath, appointed times of Leviticus 23, or kosher eating, to be required of Ancient Israel or the Jewish people for the pre-resurrection era, and that they do not carry on into the post-resurrection era. An Old Testament theologian like Walter C. Kaiser, from the Reformed tradition, expresses the view, “Only those laws from which Christ releases his church may be jettisoned,”⁵ meaning those things directly impacted by the Messiah’s sacrificial work. Kaiser and Messianic Believers, like the authors of this article, actually have no disagreement on the general validity of the Torah; we just differ on the matter of *how much* actually has changed with Yeshua’s arrival, and we would interpret various passages in the Apostolic Scriptures regarding some specific Torah practices a bit differently.

Yeshua’s fulfillment of the Torah should not at all be thought to exclude changes *naturally resultant* from His sacrificial work—if indeed His sacrificial work is recognized to be the most important event in human history. However, it can be quite safe to conclude that while there are various changes which have been enacted to the role of the Torah, by the Messiah’s sacrifice—as they involve things like capital punishment or the Levitical priesthood—that the considerable bulk of daily and weekly instructions, including keeping *Shabbat* or eating kosher, remain intact. There are others in the Messianic community, though, who think that nothing substantial has changed between the eras prior to and following Yeshua’s death, burial, and resurrection—and that things remain relatively the same. This is a definite problem for which some resolution needs to be decisively offered. **The most important event to manifest itself in salvation history, at present, has to be given its proper place within the spirituality and theology of contemporary Messianic Believers.**

No changes of any kind in the post-resurrection era?

Many of today’s Christian people think that on this side of Yeshua’s sacrifice, on this side of the cross within the post-resurrection era, that the Law of Moses has been completely abolished, and that things have completely changed. This is obviously a position which today’s Messianic Believers do not agree with. Yet at the same time, many of today’s Messianic people will argue in reverse—even vehemently perhaps—that there have been *no changes* at all since the death and resurrection of the Messiah. It is not at all uncommon, for example, when suggesting to a Messianic, “Torah observant” person that there have been some alterations enacted to the role of various parts of the Torah, such as capital punishment or the Levitical priesthood, within the post-resurrection era, to be haphazardly quoted Malachi 3:6a: “For I, the LORD, do not change...,” *ki ani ADONAI lo shani’ti* (כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה לֹא שֵׁנִיתִי).

⁴ Consult the exegesis paper on Matthew 5:17-19, “Has the Law Been Fulfilled?” by J.K. McKee, appearing in his book *The New Testament Validates Torah*.

⁵ Kaiser, *Toward Old Testament Ethics*, 312.

It should be stressed that when we talk about alterations being enacted by the sacrificial work of the Messiah, which affect various aspects of the Torah, that the authors are not saying that Yeshua abolished the seventh-day Sabbath, appointed times, kosher, or even male circumcision. We are talking about adequately factoring in the once-for-all-sacrifice of the Eternal Son of God, to **permanently atone for human sin**, and how the most important event in human history has undeniably affected some of the dynamics. Malachi 3:6, in its entirety, reads “For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.” The Hebrew verb *shanah* (שָׁנָה), appearing in the Qal stem (simple action, active voice), means “change,” “be different,” or “repeat, do s.thg again” (*CHALOT*).⁶ Malachi 3:6 speaks of the immutable, unchanging character of our Eternal God, who is able to restrain Himself and be fair in judgment, unlike limited mortals who are unfair and who change at a whim. While God’s character is surely expressed through the principles and virtues of Moses’ Teaching, God’s character has been manifestly expressed through His Son Yeshua being sacrificed for human sin.

Natural change, occurring through the progression of salvation history, does not at all necessitate, or even permit, the abrogation of the principles God’s Torah. But, the sacrifice of Yeshua will necessitate a reorientation of various instructions previously given to regulate sin in the pre-resurrection era, and will have to take into serious consideration a trajectory of Scripture to return humanity to an idyllic condition, which was lost at the Fall with Adam and Eve.

The significance of the Messiah event, and the natural changes it has enacted, can be easily seen when one considers the words of Ephesians 3:5-6, which speak of “the mystery of Messiah, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit.” A major part of this mystery is that “the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Messiah Yeshua through the gospel” (Ephesians 3:7). Those from the nations, who put their trust in Israel’s Messiah, are to be regarded as citizens of the Commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:11-13, 19). While the Torah, for example, afforded a great deal of equality to the ancient sojourner in the community of Ancient Israel; the work of Israel’s Messiah offers a level of inclusion within an enlarged Kingdom realm of Israel, and a total equality, that can only be fully realized in His saving activity for all people.⁷

You may get a concession from a few people within the One Torah/One Law sub-movement, that indeed, in the post-resurrection era non-Jewish people do get to be much more easily included into the community of Israel, then the *gerim* (גֵּרִים) or sojourners got included in the Pentateuch—as revolutionary as the inclusion of the sojourner in Israel surely was for the Torah as Ancient Near Eastern law. But, some people within the “Torah movement,” quite disturbingly, are often not too prone to consider a statement like that of Hebrews 10:10: “we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Yeshua the Messiah

⁶ *CHALOT*, 378.

⁷ For a further discussion, consult the relevant sections of the publication *One Law for All*, as well as *Are Non-Jewish Believers Really a Part of Israel?*, both by J.K. McKee.

once for all.” Hebrews 9:26 also states, “now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself,” with the main work remaining being His return and the resurrection of the righteous dead (cf. Hebrews 9:28). These are historical events, as testified by Holy Scriptures, which have altered spiritual realities to some degree.

While none of us should doubt future activities regarding the Levitical priesthood and sacrificial system, in association with the Abomination of Desolation (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:4) and Millennial Kingdom (cf. Ezekiel chs. 40-44)—as Hebrews 7:18 only speaks of a “setting aside” of the Levitical priesthood, presumably until future prophecies occur⁸—it would be impossible to argue from the Apostolic Scriptures that the Levitical priesthood and sacrificial system maintains the exact same significance on this side of Yeshua’s sacrifice, that it did prior to His arrival. Hebrews 9:12 specifies, after all, “through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.” It is further stated, “The *Torah* has a shadow of the good things to come—not the form itself of the realities. For this reason it can never, by means of the same sacrifices year after year, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers—cleansed once and for all—would no longer have consciousness of sins?” (Hebrews 10:1-2, TLV).

One of the most difficult verses of the Apostolic Scriptures, which contemporary Messianics have had to deal with, is where Hebrews 7:12 does speak of how “when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also.” Here, one encounters both *metatithemenēs tēs hierōsunēs* (μετατιθεμένης...τῆς ἱερωσύνης) and *nomou metathesis* (νόμου μετάθεσις), “priesthood is altered” and “an alteration of law” (TLV), stated. What does a “change of law” represent or involve? It is easily discerned within the context of Hebrews ch. 7 that, in light of the Messiah’s sacrificial and priestly work, that involves a transition of service from the Levitical priesthood to the previous Melchizedekian priesthood. Yeshua the Messiah operates in Heaven as a Melchizedekian priest (Hebrews 5:10; 6:20; 7:15, 17).

In his Complete Jewish Bible, David H. Stern renders Hebrews 7:12 with, “For if the system of *cohanim* [priests] is transformed, there must of necessity occur a transformation of *Torah*.” He justifies this on the basis that “no change or transformation in *Torah* is envisioned other than in connection with the priesthood and sacrificial system. The term ‘*metathesis*’ implies retention of the basic structure of *Torah*, with some of its elements rearranged (‘transformed’); it does not imply abrogation of either the *Torah* as a whole or of *mitzvot* [commandments] not connected with the priesthood and the sacrificial system.”⁹ These conclusions are most useful. The *nomou metathesis* most certainly includes a recognition of Yeshua the Messiah as the central focus of the Father’s redemptive activity (cf. Hebrews 1:1-4; 13:8), because only the Messiah event can sub-

⁸ Notably, the word of Hebrews 7:18 was given with the impending destruction of the Second Temple in mind.

⁹ Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, 681.

stantially “change” anything as it regards the approach God’s people have to key aspects of the Torah.

The Epistle to the Hebrews, as any cursory reading or survey will reveal, is concerned about how various First Century Jewish Believers (and probably many non-Jewish Believers as well) were going to handle the reality that Yeshua’s Melchizedekian priesthood is superior to the Levitical priesthood. The author of Hebrews’ issue was not with the Ten Commandments, or how Yeshua directed His followers to observe the Torah *most especially* in matters of relationship with other people (i.e., Matthew chs. 5-7). One cannot use Hebrews 7:12 and the “change in law” to cast aside the significance of the seventh-day Sabbath/*Shabbat*, the appointed times, or kosher dietary laws—*much less* any of the Torah’s commandments regulating human ethics and morality. One can use Hebrews 7:12 to argue that the “change in law,” required by Yeshua’s priesthood, involves the capital penalties of the Torah being remitted by His sacrifice at Golgotha (cf. Colossians 2:14), and various rearrangements and reprioritizations naturally enacted by what the Lord has accomplished.

There is some difficulty presented here to various Messianic people today, who might believe or try to argue, that every single commandment of the Torah can be followed today. This precludes that with the coming of Yeshua *nothing has changed*, and humankind still needs ongoing animal sacrifices for the forgiveness of sins. But the coming of Yeshua to Planet Earth *did change things*, just as the development of economics and technology has rendered certain aspects of the Torah unapplicable to its followers, such as the laws concerning slavery.¹⁰

Yeshua asserted in His Sermon on the Mount, “Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished” (Matthew 5:17-19, RSV). It is common, in many evangelical Christian sectors, to conclude that this means that the Messiah came to only fulfill the Torah’s prophecies, but His fulfillment obviously involves much more (cf. Matthew 3:15). Alas, though, properly evaluating the significance of the Messiah event in human history, and how it has affected the role of the Torah, is one which has become far too polarized in recent days via the actions of many “Torah observant” Messianic people. **The Messiah event, and the natural changes resultant of Yeshua’s sacrifice, have been widely ignored.** The following observation of R.T. France is well taken:

“[T]he authority of the law and the prophets is not abolished. They remain the authoritative word of God. But their role will no longer be the same, now that what they pointed forward to has come, and it will be for Jesus’ followers to discern in the light of his teaching and practice what is now the right way to apply those texts in the new situation which his coming has created.”¹¹

Various Christian traditions, which rightly think that the Law has not been abolished, can go a bit too far, in only thinking that the Torah’s ethical and moral

¹⁰ Consult the relevant sections of the article “Addressing the Frequently Avoided Issues Messianics Encounter in the Torah” by J.K. McKee.

¹¹ R.T. France, *New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 183.

instructions are what exclusively remain valid for the post-resurrection era. Many in the One Law sub-movement, however, would be unwilling to concede the presence of some alterations in terms of the Levitical priesthood, animal sacrifices, and capital punishment for the post-resurrection era—all areas of the Torah, which it is safe to say, have been directly affected by Yeshua's offering up of Himself.

Where has change been affected by the Messiah event?

What are some of the most significant areas which have been affected by Yeshua's sacrifice for sinful humanity? These are areas where there is a growing amount of spiritual and theological tension developing within various parts of the broad Messianic community:

1. **The animal sacrifices and associated Levitical priesthood have been side aside until the prophecies of the Tribulation period and Millennium are to occur:** “For on the one hand, a former requirement is set aside because of its weakness and ineffectiveness...For the *Torah* appoints as *kohanim g'dolim* [high priests] men who have weakness; but the word of the oath [cf. Psalm 110:4], which came after the *Torah*, appoints a Son—made perfect forever” (Hebrews 7:18, 28, TLV).
2. **The Torah's code of capital punishment may be regarded as having been nailed to the cross, and absorbed by the sacrifice of Yeshua:** “He wiped out the handwritten record of debts with the decrees against us, which was hostile to us. He took it away by nailing it to the cross” (Colossians 2:14, TLV).
3. **The equality of all people, particularly males and females which was lost at the Fall (Genesis 3:16b), has been restored:** “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Messiah Yeshua” (Galatians 3:28; contra. t.*Berachot* 6:18). **Concurrent with this, there is to be a decisive restructuring of familial authority on the basis of mutual submission, and the service of husband and wife to one another as co-leaders of the home (Ephesians 5:21ff, esp. 5:30, 33).**
4. **The sign of male circumcision, as an identifying feature of God's people, is to be viewed as secondary to water immersion, which is not only to be associated with Yeshua's death, burial, and resurrection—but is something that can be practiced by both males and females:** “Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Messiah Yeshua have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Messiah was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:3-4).

These four areas listed above, which we would assert have been directly impacted by the Messiah event, are places where Outreach Israel and TNN

Online will find itself, at times, running into some level of clashes with various other Messianic ministries and groups, across the broad Messianic spectrum:

1. There are Messianic people you will encounter, who have widely disregarded the Epistle to the Hebrews as inspired Scripture. They cannot handle its author's assertions about the superior sacrifice of Yeshua, the Messiah serving as a Melchizidekian priest, and the limitations of the First Century C.E. Levitical priesthood when compared and contrasted to Yeshua's priesthood. While there is no doubting the fact that there are some challenging passages within Hebrews—perhaps due to ancient First Century background issues, textual issues via the Greek Septuagint, or transmission issues from Hebrews' Greek source text into English—tossing a book out of the Bible by any Messianic person, sets a dangerous precedent, when instead some (significant) effort should be expended to understand a text.¹²
2. Many Messianic people today, and even some Messianic teachers and leaders, are unsure of what to do with Colossians 2:14. Much of this is because of how many contemporary Christians will just quote Colossians 2:14 haphazardly, and assert that the Law of Moses was nailed to the cross of Christ. If we treat Paul's letter to the Colossians with any degree of respect, one has to acknowledge that *something* was nailed to the execution-stake of Yeshua.¹³ Many Christians since the Reformation have rightly asserted that the Torah was not nailed to the cross, but instead either the record of human sin and/or the capital penalties of the Torah which were absorbed by the Messiah. For Messianic people who acknowledge the Messiah event as the most important event in history, recognizing that what was nailed to the cross as the capital penalties of the Torah—and that capital punishment should scarcely be used today—is not a problem. But, there are many other Messianic people who do not consider Yeshua's sacrifice as the most important event in history.¹⁴
3. The issue of equality, for all people in Messiah, is one which the Messianic movement is presently debating right now, on multiple planes. There is debate within Messianic Judaism right now over what way to approach the facets of distinction between Jewish and non-Jewish Believers in the Scriptures. A great number within the One Torah/One Law sub-movement adhere to a patriarchal model of leadership within both the family and congregation. Those who adhere to an egalitarian model within both the family

¹² For further examination, consult the commentary *Hebrews for the Practical Messianic* by J.K. McKee.

¹³ From the authors' own Wesleyan heritage, John Wesley would say on Colossians 2:14, "This was not properly our sins themselves (they were the debt), but their guilt and cry before God" (*Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, 747).

¹⁴ For a further examination, consult the commentary *Colossians and Philemon for the Practical Messianic* by J.K. McKee.

and congregation, and how it is to affect Jewish and non-Jewish relations in the Body of Messiah, have to be considerably steadfast in the present season. For, we believe that a major part of the purpose of God is to return humanity to the equal state in which Adam and Even existed in Eden. Various instructions in the Torah which appear to be upholding a male-exclusive leadership model, instead should be read from the Thirteenth Century B.C.E. vantage point as widely subverting male-exclusive Ancient Near Eastern law codes contemporary to Ancient Israel, affording a much higher level of respect and rights to females.¹⁵

4. The rite of male circumcision, particularly for native-born Jews and Israelites, is not something that has been abolished by the Messiah. And, while non-Jewish males have not directly received the covenant of circumcision as physical descendants of Abraham, they are nonetheless recipients of its benefits, and should be circumcised with future eschatological realities in view (i.e., Ezekiel 44:9). Still, the emphasis of the Apostolic Scriptures in the post-resurrection era places a higher priority on circumcision of the heart brought about via the power of the good news (i.e., Colossians 2:11). More important to be sure, would be on how water immersion for both males and females enables them to identify with Yeshua's work on the tree and His resurrection (Galatians 3:27), and with this in place, male circumcision has admittedly lost a degree of luster. Contemporary Messianics have not always noted how the Apostolic Scriptures place a higher priority on water immersion.¹⁶

On the cross or execution-stake, Yeshua uttered the ever-important words "It is finished!" and He dies (John 19:30). The verb *teleō* (τελέω), employed in the source text, can mean "to complete, fulfil, accomplish, and, generally, to execute, perform" (LS),¹⁷ being related to the noun *telos* (τέλος), which itself often means "the goal toward which a movement is being directed, end, goal, outcome" (BDAG; cf. Romans 10:4, Grk.).¹⁸ Within the realm of lexical possibilities, John 19:30 can be rendered with "It is accomplished!" (CJB)¹⁹ or "It has been brought to the goal!", speaking of the final atonement for human sin being offered, and full reconciliation between humankind and its Creator now provided for.²⁰ To argue that "It is finished!" somehow pertains to a declaration made nulli-

¹⁵ For a further examination, consult the relevant sections of the commentaries *Galatians for the Practical Messianic* and *Ephesians for the Practical Messianic* by J.K. McKee.

¹⁶ The issues of male circumcision and water immersion will be addressed in the forthcoming book *Torah In the Balance, Volume II* by J.K. McKee.

¹⁷ LS, 798.

¹⁸ BDAG, 998.

¹⁹ "it has been accomplished" (Robert K. Brown and Philip W. Comfort, trans., *The New Greek-English Interlinear New Testament* [Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 1990], 400).

²⁰ George R. Beasley-Murray, *Word Biblical Commentary: John*, Vol 36 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 352 adds,

"After drinking the wine [or vinegar], Jesus uttered his last word known to the Evangelist, τετέλεσται [*telestai*]. The rendering, 'It is finished!' conveys only half the meaning. For the verb τελέω fundamentally denotes 'to carry out' the will of somebody, whether of oneself or another, and so to fulfill obligations or carry out religious act."

fying the Mosaic Torah, is quite out of place, as Yeshua's words concern atonement of sins. What would be most appropriate would be to argue that "It is finished!" relates to the consummation, culmination, and goal of human history: that aim to which the Torah pointed.

However, when many of today's Messianic people encounter Yeshua's word in John 19:30, they do not know what to do. Why is this the case? **This is because the Messiah event is not the most important event to them in history.** Is this a result of "the message of the cross [being] foolishness to those who are perishing" (1 Corinthians 1:18, TLV), and that many do not possess the salvation they think they do? *We will have to leave the ultimate determination of the salvation of some "Torah observant" Messianic people to our Eternal God.* But what we do know is that, within the present season of the development of the Messianic movement and Torah restoration, a sizeable enough group of people have lost sight of the Messiah event. They have overlooked, or just flat forgotten, how Yeshua "is the culmination of the law [the goal of the *Torah*, TLV]"²¹ so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes" (Romans 10:4, TNIV).

To acknowledge Yeshua's sacrifice as the most important event in history, hardly means that the Torah has been abolished! The role of some practices and decrees have been reoriented for sure. Most importantly, Yeshua's sacrifice has inaugurated the era of the New Covenant, which not only provides a permanent atonement for human sin, but also provides people with **the Supernatural Compulsion** to obey the Torah's instructions—hardly an abolishment of Moses' Teaching—as God's Spirit transcribes it on the hearts and minds of men and women who have acknowledged Israel's Messiah via the gospel and have been redeemed:

"For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, 'THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY TORAH [more lit. 'My laws,' νόμους μου, *nomos Mou*] UPON THEIR HEART, AND UPON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE IT'; *He then says, 'AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE'* [Jeremiah 31:34]. Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer *any* offering for sin. Having therefore, brothers and sisters, confidence to enter into the holy place by the blood of Yeshua, by the way which He inaugurated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and *having* a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our body washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful" (Hebrews 10:14-23, author's rendering from *Hebrews for the Practical Messianic*).

²¹ Grk. *telos...nomou Christos* (τέλος...νόμου Χριστός).

The Significance of the Messiah Event

An honest Bible reader cannot deny the fact that God's people do live in a post-resurrection era, where the sacrifice of Yeshua the Messiah for human sins has changed a number of the dynamics. Yeshua's work at Golgotha (Calvary) has enacted some alterations concerning the penalties of the Torah decreed upon Law-breakers being absorbed by the Messiah's sacrifice (Colossians 2:14), and necessary reorientations regarding the animal sacrifices of the Torah and the Messiah's Melchizedkian priesthood (Hebrews 7:12). Yet, God's standard of sin still remains consistent, and His immutable character and requirement for His people to live holy remains constant. Yeshua's sacrifice, per His own words about fulfilling and not abolishing the Torah (Matthew 5:17-19), do not make the Law of God, and the Tanach or Old Testament, irrelevant instruction and direction as far as His people are concerned. God's standard defining both sinful behavior and holy behavior is first found in the Torah of Moses.

How we get many of today's Messianic people back onto a path where they recognize Yeshua the Messiah, and what He has accomplished—as **the center of their faith**—might not be as easy as it should be in the short term. While individuals are ultimately responsible for the choices that they make, a huge responsibility is still, nevertheless, placed upon teachers and leaders (cf. James 3:1). Not enough people who have a voice within the Messianic movement, particularly within the One Torah/One Law sub-movement, have placed Yeshua's work, His salvation, and the supernatural power of the gospel, at the center of their words and actions. The Torah or Pentateuch is, too frequently for some, more important than the Messiah Himself.

If we cannot understand how important it is to contemplate the gravity of the Messiah event for our own, individual selves—how will we be able to contemplate it on a larger scale for His corporate people? The gospel of salvation is certainly a message of individuals being redeemed from eternal punishment, and seeing them spiritually regenerated and set onto a path of sanctification and holiness. But, the good news is also a message of God's Kingdom being restored, which is to culminate at the Messiah's Second Coming. The Kingdom of God is composed of redeemed individuals—so any understanding of the corporate tasks and purposes the Lord would have the emerging Messianic movement accomplish, can only be preceded by individuals themselves placing the Messiah event at the center of their being! How much time and energy have been squandered by us, because we have failed to consider the imperatives of God's mission, realized in the Messiah event? *What do you have to take before the Lord in your next time of prayer and meditation with Him?*

Make sure that you are a man or woman of faith, who recognizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) as the most important event in human history! As you do this, expect to see the Messianic movement refined into a significant spiritual force for good, as we approach our Lord's return.

TNN ONLINE EDITOR'S UPDATE

August 2013

Dear Friends:

As I have been reporting for quite a while, I presently find myself in a very busy season, putting



to paper many thoughts, on a variety of key issues, a number of which were partially put on hold from late 2011 to early 2013. Between the season of us converting all of the TNN Press books into eBook format, and then moving from Central Florida to North Texas, a few things just had to wait. Over the past several months I have been coordinating the quick completion of a variety of new titles. Over the next few months, you will see the total arsenal of TNN Press titles level at around 44 or 45. After this the time to be committed to new books will take a little longer, as we will no longer be afforded a number of half- or three-quarters-finished files.

One of the most significant new titles, to be looking for release this Fall, is the ***Messianic Torah Helper***, which has been something in-process for over three-and-a-half years! This publication originally came together by “accident,” as we realized in anticipation of the paperback release of *The New Testament Validates Torah*, that that book could only be so big (430 pages). Some chapters from the old *NTVT* were transplanted into this new file, and then we let circumstances—and of course the Lord—orchestrate the rest. The *Messianic Torah Helper* rough draft was completed the first week of August, and topped out at 550 pages. Much of the additional information was purposefully included, not only because of the many associated FAQ entries with various chapters—but even more specifically to help those who will only get the paperback publication, and have no Internet access, such as those who rely on our Prison Ministry—Free Book Fund. This forthcoming publication addresses a wide variety of issues today’s Messianic people encounter when they consider “Torah.”

This September will begin a planned year-long study of the Epistle to the Romans, which I have been waiting quite a while to get started—since the completion of my M.A. in Biblical Studies in 2009. I have just finished putting together the introductory notes, and will soon begin the notes for ch. 1. All I can say about this so far is that this will be an important Messianic study for the 2010s! Some significant proposals present in contemporary Messianic examination, that may have not made it into other Messianic resources, will be considered. Most especially, though, this study will make some effort to evaluate the great relevance of Paul’s letter to the Romans, and with it some of the growing pains within our contemporary Messianic community.

Until next month...

J.K. McKee