

OIM UPDATE

February 2014

This year has commenced with our family finally being integrated into a Messianic Jewish community of faith here in the Dallas area. What a blessing to find like-minded Believers, who are exercising their spiritual gifts to minister to the Body of Messiah in tangible ways! As a ministry family, we are delighted with the opportunity to serve with these sons and daughters of the Most High, and look forward to advancing the Kingdom of God along with them in this region.

With serving in mind, coupled with considerable time over the holiday season with immediate family and friends, I spent considerable time reflecting on memories in light of the present realities and future expectations. These thought processes led me to write the lead article in this month's newsletter, entitled "**Inheritance Issues,**" which deals with some of the challenges Messianic Believers must contend with in their respective environments. Hopefully, honestly addressing some of the societal problems, and recognizing the solutions available from a Messianic approach to the Holy One, will inspire many to serve Him wherever they are located.

As many of you are aware, who faithfully partner with us and support the **Theological Defense Trust**, we are a relatively small family ministry committed to publishing books and materials that address a wide variety of theological issues. For many years it has been difficult to gain recognition in the broader Messianic Jewish community for the work that has been completed. We have a significant, confidential situation that is ongoing, **which will need your ongoing prayer and intercession.** We are encouraged with how the Lord is slowly moving, but need you to join with us, given the scope of everything that we do! And, we have many more things to do to equip the Body of Messiah!

Finally, we are still receiving almost daily requests from prisoners for our **Prison Ministry-Free Book Outreach** to the least of our brethren (Matthew 25:40). Your gifts to these in need are much appreciated.

Advancing His kingdom, until the restoration of all things...

Mark Huey

INHERITANCE ISSUES

by Mark Huey

In the closing months of the year, when a wide number of family traditions are being remembered and perhaps celebrated, invariably the classic holiday film, “It’s a Wonderful Life,” is either recollected or even viewed for the umpteenth time. This year, although I neglected to actually watch it, I did spend considerable time thinking about some of its inspiring themes. These recollections occurred frequently because almost every time I read the newspaper or went to the Internet for news, I was reminded by shocking articles that **the America where I was raised is radically different.** The often reported moral declension should no longer be characterized as being on a slippery slope, but is rather in a literal freefall. America is on the verge of becoming a godless, debauched, “Pottersville like” society—rather than a godly, comparatively wholesome, Bedford Falls milieu. The uplifting theme of Frank Capra’s movie, about George Bailey’s humble, self-sacrificial life, well lived and having a positive impact on family, friends, and the community at large, reverberated often. Occasionally, I contemplated the thought, “Where have the believing George Baileys gone?” and wondered about what kind of an inheritance will be left for future generations.

Upon layering in some personal thoughts about the fact that our family and considerable others around the globe in recent decades have chosen to pursue the Holy One from a Messianic perspective, I came to the **hopeful conclusion that the Messianic movement might be one more, if not a final attempt by the Almighty, to bring moral sanity back to many living in the world, before the return of Yeshua the Messiah.** But in order for Him to accomplish such an objective, He is going to once again rely upon His Holy Spirit endowed people, to not only continue to spread the gospel, but live and model lives that exemplify His righteousness, before yet another wicked and perverse generation solely bent on pursuing the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life (1 John 2:16).

Given this challenge, have you ever wondered *why* the Judeo-Christian culture that has flourished in Western civilization for centuries, and established the United States of America on Biblical principles, has failed to maintain its godly influence on modern society to the point of succumbing to godless secular humanism? While it would require volumes to describe the various forms of moral erosion that have led to this lamentable result, there is perhaps one fundamental underlying reason. **The great majority of the professing Christian and Jewish population has disregarded the serious consequences of disobeying the Ten Commandments given to humanity by the Creator God.** This heartrending observation was concluded, as a national furor erupted when some crude terms by a popular reality TV star published by a pop magazine, overshadowed his impassioned attempt to quote the following verses from the Holy Bible:

“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; **neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God**” (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

While reading and listening to some of the written and voiced outrage—primarily from the segment of the culture that advocates same sex-marriage and complicit news commentators—some questions and concerns arose about the **other** nine habitual offenders listed with the homosexuals. What about the fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate (sexual perverts), thieves, coveters, drunkards, revilers, and swindlers? **Why the relative lack of publicized complaints from these other commandment-breakers noted in the verse, who will also *not* inherit the Kingdom of God?** Is it possible that our culture has become so ignorant of sin that these **equally damning** habitual transgressions are no longer considered serious breaches of God’s revealed laws? Or has the insidious transformation of society arrived at the point, where these violators are uniformly accepted and excused for their bad behavior, because they are perceived as doing minimal harm to themselves or others?

In pondering these thoughts, it dawned on me that this relatively rapid decline over the past century, since what is known as the Victorian Age in Western civilization, has gone hand-in-hand with the advent and maturation of “moving pictures” by the media/entertainment industry. As the name “movie” euphemistically denotes, wholesome films like Capra’s can inspire people to self-sacrificial works for the betterment of the community. On the other hand, if one wants to “move” or alter a society and denigrate cultural mores, simply communicate a contrasting set of values on film and cinema over an extended period of time, and inculcate the civilization with flesh-satisfying images and themes. Shockingly to the chagrin and detriment of the Judeo-Christian culture, the eye-catching moving lights on a screen or in a box, have been used by the “angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14), to systematically remove the stigmas attached to blatant sin by progressively searing the consciences of people over time. This is disconcerting because in Paul’s letter to the Romans, he is noted that it is not just the Jews, who were given the Torah of God and who are accountable to it—but that every person from the nations, who has been given a conscience, is going to be accountable to its principles:

“For as many as sinned without Law will also perish without Law. And as many as sinned within Law will be judged through Law. For not the hearers of the Law are just with God, but the doers of the Law shall be justified. For when nations not having Law do by nature the things of the Law, they not having Law are a law to themselves, **who show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience witnessing with them, and the thoughts between one another accusing or even excusing**, in a day when God judges the hidden things of men, according to my gospel, through Jesus Christ” (Romans 2:12-16, LITV).

As the conscience is being seared, one does not necessarily have to be a

film aficionado, but simply a casual observer of the movies and television shows that have been produced over the past century, to note that many of the transgressions listed in Paul's admonition to the Corinthians above, have been subtly transformed in more recent decades *from frowned upon human behavior to near glorification*. Premarital sex (fornication) and extra-marital sex (adultery) have become the accepted norm, if not expected of most. Idolatry is ubiquitous in forms too many to mention. Revilers openly curse God, as fearing God is mocked and considered antiquated along with the Bible. Perverted sex (effeminate) trending to homosexual relations and same-sex marriage are becoming the civil law of many U.S. states almost monthly. Thieves and swindlers (who might even be incarcerated) are being made into heroic figures with simply minor flaws in character, in story after story. Drinking excessively and even intoxication, whether from alcohol or drugs, are becoming commonplace from the ghetto to the penthouse and everywhere in between.

If people were not so anesthetized by the prevailing culture that is advocating unconstrained hedonism without any consequences for sin, they might pause for just a minute and consider the seriousness of Paul's words, and ask a simple question. Is Paul actually saying that people who habitually indulge in these other transgressions of God's Law (listed above) are ***also not going to inherit the Kingdom of God?*** Obviously from the outraged response, the homosexual community was offended, **but what about the other commandment breakers?**

Consider, for example, the fornicators: the first transgression found in Paul's list to the Corinthians. While premarital sex has been around since the earliest of times, it has in recent decades become commonplace, not only among those without any godly values, but lamentably, even among those who claim to be followers of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In a cursory glance at a number of American surveys by a wide variety of polls, including those coming from a Christian perspective, it is noted that only 3% of respondents indicate that they have *not* indulged in premarital sex (fornication). More narrowly, only 20% of Christian respondents indicate that they have abstained from sex prior to marriage. **These statistics, even if mistaken by a large margin, are quite alarming.** They confirm the revealing reason why there was *not* a bitter outcry from the great majority of people, who have simply been acculturated by what the media outlets have redefined as socially accepted and even, expected sexual behavior. **In other words, fornication has become such an overwhelming reality in the modern era, that the Biblical warnings are no longer discouraging flesh-driven attitudes and behavior.** Regrettably, the other transgressions listed have arrived at a similar level of acceptance, even though in the case of adultery, the surveyed admit that they number only in the 50 plus percentile of respondents. Without going into any further detail, perhaps these sad realities—often glowingly reported in the media, or glorified in the movies and on television—helps one understand why it appears that America has become a modern-day Pottersville!

Realistically, these cultural challenges are not going away, as the rapidly

expanding majority of the American population is being molded by the seductive activities of the Evil One, and the powerful godless media outlets that are driven to exploit and financially gain from human beings' fallen nature. Obviously as stated above, the Judeo-Christian influenced population of Western civilization has *not* been the "salt and light" that they should have been, based on the direction of the God-less, pagan world that has developed. When Yeshua spoke these words to His predominantly Torah-honoring Jewish audience gathered on the Mount near Capernaum, He linked salt and light with the imperative to not abolish what had been communicated down through the centuries through the Torah of Moses and the Prophets, **but rather, keep and teach them to others:**

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty *again*? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. **You are the light of the world.** A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. **Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.** For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others *to do* the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:13-19).

As Western Civilization continues to further resemble the fictional Pottersville, the salt has lost its savor and the light has grown extremely dim. Keeping and teaching God's commandments is not a priority in most Christian environments, because a considerable amount of the instruction has relegated the Law to the Old Testament, with focus instead on varied and enlightened, "modern" ways, to interpret the New Testament. Nevertheless Believers, who trust in the veracity of the Holy Writ, should rest assured that everything written and promised in the Scriptures will *not* pass until all is accomplished, **including inclusion or exclusion from inheriting the Kingdom of God due to habitual sin.**

However, recent surveys indicate that a growing minority of modern-day Americans claim to *not* be "Christians," or even acknowledge that there is a God. But what about the problem alluded to earlier, as descendants of the Judeo-Christian influenced culture are unwilling to acknowledge or be alarmed about the serious consequences of breaking God's laws? Where is the fear of the Lord regarding blatant sin, as articulated in the Scriptures? Are people not concerned about whether or not they are going to inherit the Kingdom of God? Do people not realize that eventually, **"each one of us will give an account of himself to God"** (Romans 14:12)? Based on the statistical evidence and the relative lack of any notable publicized outcry by the other nine offenses listed in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, perhaps many of those violations of God's laws

have simply become acceptable activities. **Or at most, merely minor sins that are not associated with the serious eternal consequence of not inheriting the Kingdom of God.**

This honest appraisal is very disheartening to contemplate, especially considering the potential outcome for people deceived by the world and the things of the world. For most assuredly, people are blinded by their lusts and pride concerning the will of God, as described in this warning from the Apostle John:

“Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever” (1 John 2:15-17).

Thankfully, modern-day followers of the Messiah have some recorded testimonies that reveal insights on how to address not only religious people—but also skeptics, philosophers, intellectuals, and unbelievers with forthright declarations. Here in the following passage, the Apostle Paul was provoked in his spirit to tell not only his detractors, but to all gathered, about the Creator God and how He sent His Son Yeshua to die and be resurrected from the dead. Needless to say, this matter-of-fact approach had its perfect will on *some* of the listeners, as noted at the conclusion of the interaction:

“Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols. So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing *Gentiles*, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present. And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him. Some were saying, ‘What would this idle babbler wish to say?’ Others, ‘He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities,’—because he was preaching Yeshua and the resurrection. And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, ‘May we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming? For you are bringing some strange things to our ears; so we want to know what these things mean.’ (Now all the Athenians and the strangers visiting there used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new.) So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, ‘Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, “TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.” Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all *people* life and breath and all things; and He made from one *man* every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and

exist, as even some of your own poets have said, “For we also are His children.” Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. **Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.** Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some *began* to sneer, **but others said, ‘We shall hear you again concerning this’**” (Acts 17:16-32).

Hence, it is from this encounter in Ancient Athens, and many other examples found in the Holy Writ, that Believers should take solace in understanding that despite the vociferous detractors found in the marketplace of ideas, **it is our personal responsibility to fervently proclaim the truth about Yeshua when given the opportunity.** While the Apostle Paul clearly had a unique call on his life to preach the good news to the nations (Acts 9:15), it is also incumbent upon every Believer to share the mysterious reality of the Messiah residing in his or her heart, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27), when given the Spirit-led opportunity. Then as noted in this passage, some will be convicted to hear more about the claims of the resurrected Messiah. When that occurs, additional explanations should follow, as the inevitable questions arise in the heart and mind of those being led by the Spirit of God to know more. **Hopefully as many have experienced in sharing the gospel, some people will place their trust in the accomplished work of the Messiah at Golgotha and inherit the Kingdom of God!**

Preaching the gospel in and out of season (2 Timothy 4:2), as the Spirit leads, is critical—but must also be followed up with the more arduous and lifelong work of making disciples of the Messiah, to whom all power and authority over Heaven and Earth was given:

“And Yeshua came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. **Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you;** and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age’” (Matthew 28:18-20).

Of course, making disciples by teaching them to observe all that Yeshua commanded, as the End of the Age approaches—is why we believe the Holy One has methodically over the past century begun, and in recent decades accelerated, the long ago prophesied restoration of all things (Acts 3:19-21). **The arrival and maturing development of the Messianic movement among Jews and non-Jews is tangible evidence, as the parallels with the advent and growth of the cinema industry, are difficult to ignore.** Sadly, the wily Adversary has utilized extremely talented but God-less people to produce eye-catching lights on screens to promote a nefarious agenda that has kept people polluted by sin or simply unaware of its detrimental existence. On the other hand, the Lord has increasingly turned countless thousands of believing Jewish and non-Jewish Believers back to the ancient paths of the Torah (Jeremiah 6:16), **in order to**

better comprehend, model, and lovingly teach His statutes. In many respects, as sin has increased, it has been counterbalanced by grace abounding all the more (Romans 5:20).

It is our prayer that through this genuine “Messianic” move of the Holy Spirit that His indwelling presence will provoke people to humble themselves in order to be the salt and light that Yeshua desires His chosen to be. May they live a righteous life that exemplifies serving one another, while exercising their God-given gifts to edify the Body of the Messiah (1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12), in order to equip the saints and build the Body of Messiah in love:

“And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, **for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Messiah; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Messiah.** As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; **but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Messiah, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love”** (Ephesians 4:11-16).

As was modeled in the movie that inspired this article, may the Lord through the humble “George Baileys” of the Messianic movement place others first, so that at the end of their respective lives, they will be able to look back and see the good that came of their willingness to submit their will, to the will of the Heavenly Father, and eventually hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant!” In so doing until the Messiah returns, despite a world rapidly heading toward a Pottersville-like existence—**where many ignorant of God’s laws will *not* inherit His Kingdom**—may the Messianic Believers instead have the perseverance and faith like Abraham, who,

“[W]hen he was called, **obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance;** and he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign *land*, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; **for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God”** (Hebrews 11:8-10).

May residence in that eternal city, the Kingdom of God, be our ultimate inheritance, and not Pottersville!

Until the restoration of all things...

TNN ONLINE EDITOR'S UPDATE

February 2014

Dear Friends:

This past month, my thoughts have been widely focused toward some of the



significant projects that I talked about in the previous update written for January 2014. While ambitious for the next few years, reality has to then set in, and the daily work of seeing what can actually be accomplished in human time makes you realize that things might take a little longer than expected!

The Wednesday Night Bible Study continues through the Epistle to the Romans, with me presently (07 Feb) in the process of completing my commentary on ch. 7. So, the Romans study is almost half-way completed—but we are about to enter into those areas of the letter, like chs. 9-11 or ch. 14, which have some “complicated passages” for today’s Messianic people. This means that there will not only be some areas where I will need to think long and hard, and inquire of the Lord what needs to be said—but that I will most especially be sorting through various opinions and perspectives which need to be brought to our attention.

For the immediate future this year, I will be coordinating the production of the *Messianic Kosher Helper* book—which is going to be **much bigger** than I originally thought! Part I of the book, “The Significance of Kosher,” with three chapters still in process, is almost the size of our *Messianic Winter Holiday Helper*. Part II of the book, “A Theology of Eating and Kosher,” which really will set this publication apart, is at present about 175 pages. This is where a long list of Bible passages, that involve eating, the kosher dietary laws, and their relevance are being addressed. This is also where there has been a wide-scale Messianic avoidance to detail, and where various leaders and teachers have been flat caught ignoring verses of the Bible, either informing readers about the topic of the dietary laws, or passages which may seem to disparage the dietary laws in some way. Regardless of what the specific circumstances are, here is the list of kosher-related passages (46 total) I am presently working through:

Genesis 1:29-30*
Genesis 2:16-17*
Genesis 7:1-2*
Genesis 9:2-4*
Leviticus 11
Leviticus 20:22-26
Deuteronomy 14
Exodus 23:19; 34:26*
Genesis 18:1-15*
Genesis 32:24-32*
Leviticus 3:17; 7:26-27; 19:26
Deuteronomy 12:16-24
Judges 13:4-7
1 Samuel 14:31-34
Isaiah 65:1-15
Isaiah 66:15-17
Ezekiel 4:9-17
Ezekiel 8:5-13
Ezekiel 22:23-31
Ezekiel 44:23-24
Hosea 9:1-4
Daniel 1:8
Ecclesiastes 2:24; 3:13; 5:18; 9:7
Matthew 5:17-19
Mark 7:1-23; Matthew 15:1-20
Mark 5:1-20; Matthew 8:28-34; Luke 8:26-39
Matthew 13:47-50
Luke 11:37-41
Acts 10:1-48
Acts 11:1-18
Acts 15:19-21
Romans 14
1 Corinthians 6:12-20
1 Corinthians 8
1 Corinthians 10:14-33
1 Corinthians 11:17-24
2 Corinthians 6:14-18

Galatians 2:11-14
Philippians 3:17-19*
Colossians 2:16-23*
1 Timothy 4:1-5*
Titus 1:14-16*
Hebrews 9:8-10
Hebrews 13:9-10
1 Peter 1:14-16
Revelation 2:14

I have placed an asterisk* by each of the passages I have already addressed (07 Feb). The level of analysis of these passages, while not overly-extensive, is similar to what is seen in TNN Press publications like *The New Testament Validates Torah*. And, if you did not notice it already, while most of these passages average at about half-a-dozen verses or so, some of them are complete chapters of Scripture. The present book file for the *Messianic Kosher Helper* is 355 pages, but it will easily exceed 500.

Even though what I have described might seem a bit overwhelming in terms of the volume—and I have had a few days when I have almost **burned out**—kosher is not an issue upon which my faith, nor should anyone’s faith, rise or fall. But it is an issue which has many different components and avenues needing to be thoroughly explored and addressed. While many of these include Bible passages like “whose god is *their* appetite” (Philippians 3:19), there are also important aspects regarding all of the proposed reasons for kosher (i.e., health, avoidance of idolatry for Ancient Israel), as well as issues pertaining to bioethics and genetic engineering to be considered. Very few people in the broad Messianic movement would give a topic like kosher such an examination.

Please continue to keep us in your prayers. Your monthly support is greatly needed as we plow new fields of Messianic theology and apologetics!

Until next month...
J.K. McKee