

OIM UPDATE

July 2015

This past month has been quite challenging for American followers of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who have placed their faith in the accomplished work of Yeshua the Messiah, the Lamb of God. In many regards, there has been a spiritual paradigm shift, reminiscent of what transpired in 1973 when abortion (murder) was made the law of the land. After all, the unscriptural decision made by the Supreme Court of the United States in its recent session, will have profound debilitating consequences for not only American citizens, but by extension due to American influences, the world at large.

The Holy Spirit had prepared our hearts for what was seemingly inevitable—given the spiritual decline of American culture in this post-Christian era. For me, the “in your face” reality of viewing the White House cast in the perverted rainbow colors of the sign given to Noah, coupled with seeing the Saturday morning headlines in the Dallas Morning News proclaiming “I DO’ FOR ALL,” generated significant emotions of shock coupled with grief. The shock was not about the judge’s decision, but rather the nearly universal approval by editorial boards across the country—*and* especially what is being reported as the increasing majority of the polled population. After digesting enough testimonies to make my stomach turn, grief simply overwhelmed me. So after confessional prayers and supplication, I turned to Psalm 37 for some sustenance and salvific balm:

“A *Psalm* of David. Do not fret because of evildoers, be not envious toward wrongdoers. For they will wither quickly like the grass and fade like the green herb. Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. **Delight yourself in the LORD; and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He will do it. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light and your judgment as the noonday. Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. Cease from anger and forsake wrath; do not fret; *it leads* only to evildoing. For evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land”** (Psalm 37:1-9).

But even after reading through this lengthy Psalm of David stressing God’s sovereignty over the world and our need to wait upon Him, the Holy Spirit led me to a series of Scriptures which communicated to me some of the challenges we as Believers need to be prepared to handle. With this in mind, I have written this month’s lead article entitled, “**Righteous Divide,**” in order to share some of those Biblical truths. Hopefully some of the insights I gleaned will be helpful to others, as they also process the decision that was made, and how it will impact their relationships with family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and the public at large.

Additionally this past month, a hacker surreptitiously captured the TNN Online website domain (tnnonline.net). This has forced an important transition as the TNN Online website and TNN Press are becoming **Messianic Apologetics**.

The new website name **messianicapogetics.net** better reflects the identity and purpose of what the Lord is doing with John McKee's teaching abilities, and will more effectively communicate the principal mission of the **Theological Defense Trust**, which some of you support with your prayers and offerings. We are also in need of continued financial support for our **Prison Ministry Free Book Fund**, allowing us to place our books and newsletters among incarcerated Believers, who have a great deal of time to grow in their Messianic walk of faith. Thank you again for your contributions to this effort, because from the feedback, it is bearing much good fruit!

“The LORD bless you, and keep you; the LORD make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace” (Numbers 6:24-26).

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

RIGHTEOUS DIVIDE

by Mark Huey

As a zealous exhorter (Romans 12:8), each month I seek the Lord for what He would have me share in writing to the community of faith which Outreach Israel serves. Typically, I am usually moved by certain life events or circumstances in the Messianic arena, which are ultimately viewed through a Scriptural prism. After all, we absolutely trust God's Word and the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, who is our Comforter and Healer (John 14:26), the Spirit of truth (John 16:13). According to His Word, we as Believers are in unity with the Father and the Son (John 17:17-23):

"For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, *are* in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me" (John 17:19-23).

After seeing some photographs from our daughter's wedding in May, I was struck by the stark, visible certainty that I am no longer a young man, but instead a graying grandfather, who has hopefully received wisdom from pursuing the Holy One. As a result of such an eye-opening reality check, I initially wanted to write about how our age and time spent in the Word should mature us when dealing with children and those younger in the faith. I was going to begin my article with a reference to the following verses, as they appear in The Amplified Bible:

"The hoary head is a crown of beauty and glory if it is found in the way of righteousness (moral and spiritual rectitude in every area and relation). [Prov. 20:29.] He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, he who rules his [own] spirit than he who takes a city. The lot is cast into the lap, but the decision is wholly of the Lord [even the events that seem accidental are really ordered by Him]" (Proverbs 16:31-33, Amplified Bible).

However, when I revisited these Scriptures, as I was led to write about a completely different subject, I realize that the Father's "earlier" word from Proverbs which I was meditating upon, literally affirmed my choice of another topic. Once again, I was reminded that His Word is living and active (Hebrews 4:12), and that He is indeed providentially in control of all things. Let me explain.

On Friday, June 26, 2015, the world as we know it changed in a dramatic way. The nine current justices of the United States Supreme Court, decided in a landmark 5 to 4 decision, that "same sex" marriage is a "**fundamental right guaranteed**" by the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. This decision came, despite the founding documents being originally created in a legally binding process by people who believed in and favored Judeo-Christian values. Hence, the sacred institution of marriage, derived from the description found in Genesis 2:24—and reaffirmed by Yeshua in Matthew 19:5; Mark 10:7-8, and Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 5:31—has now been altered from one man and one woman, to any two human beings regardless of sexual orientation. In a rather unique coincidence, the timing of this decision with the current controversy surrounding the use of the Confederate flag in South Carolina, did not go unnoticed. The controversial Fourteenth Amendment that was ratified after the American Civil War on July 9, 1868, was composed to rectify the injustices which resulted from human slavery. In God's providential manner, He was drawing our attention to what some describe as the "original sin" of America (although it was inherited from colonial land owners), and the eventual consequences of such transgression against fellow humans.

Nevertheless, after seeing a news report where the White House was awash in the

light of the rainbow colors of the gay rights movement before retiring to bed, I woke up on a Saturday morning (June 27) with the shock of the decision fresh in my mind. I was greeted by a Dallas Morning News headline, which read in two inch bold letters above the fold, “I do’, for all,” redirecting my shock to sobbing grief for our nation. Then upon reading some editorials from this newspaper and a number of others on the Internet, it became apparent to me that the media elite, along with the editorial boards of most major United States cities, were elated with the decision. Needless to say, as a follower of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and Believer in the sacrificial work of Yeshua the Messiah, I had nowhere to turn for comfort—other than prayers of supplication, and then reading the Holy Scriptures on this *Shabbat* morning.

After some confessional prayers and intercession for the citizens of our nation, I was led to read Genesis 19 to recall the tragedy of what happened to Lot before, during, and after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Rereading this chapter of the Torah, reminded me of the depravity of humanity, and how the enemy of our souls has consistently perverted the intrinsic physiological sexual drive of people, originally designed to populate the Earth, with deviant practices. Sadly, those transgressions of natural laws (Romans 1:20-32), have resulted in short and long term consequences reflected in the recent court decision.

I was first appalled that Lot would offer his two virgin daughters to the lascivious men in lieu of the visiting angels (Genesis 19:8). As a father of four daughters, the thought of such an alternative made me totally disrespect Lot as a father. Thankfully, the power of the angels to blind the rapists, prevented any physical abuse to Lot’s daughters. But in viewing some of the ubiquitous news coverage of celebrations among the LGBT community, I caught glimpses of how the power of sexual sin is so intense, that I imagined what Lot had to deal with as his door was beginning to buckle under the pressure from the maddening crowd. Lamentably, when the time came for Lot to make his escape, his intended future sons-in-law refused to leave and were destroyed with the citizens of the cities, because they thought Lot was not serious about the intentions of the angels (Genesis 19:14). To make matters worse, despite the warning to not look back (Genesis 19:17), Lot’s wife could not avoid the temptation and was reduced to a pillar of salt (Genesis 19:26). Then, because it appeared that the known world had been decimated, Lot’s daughters enticed him with wine, and he got drunk to the point of having incestuous sexual relations, with them being impregnated (Genesis 19:31-38). As a result, the predecessors of the Moabites and Ammonites were born out of these licentious actions. From that time forward, the Israelites were known to have been plagued by the ungodly and threatening actions of the sons of Moab and Ammon. Even in spite the redeeming value of Ruth the Moabitess, the curses of illegitimacy upon these people (Deuteronomy 23:2-5), attempts to curse Israel taken by Balak and Balaam (Numbers 22-24), and other actions found throughout the Tanakh—the Moabites and Ammonites have been a thorn in the side of Israel.

After reading Genesis 19, I was reminded that the weekly Haftarah reading for *Chukat* on June 27 was taken from Judges 11:1-33. In this text, there is a description of the exploits of Jephthah, an illegitimate son of Gilead, who was recruited to lead Israel in its unrelenting war with Ammon. References to Chemosh, the “child sacrifice god” of Moab, as well as the tragic loss of Jephthah’s virgin daughter because of a vow Jephthah made to the Lord, are included. Some further reflections on the historical challenges with Moab and Ammon are found in Samuel-Kings and Chronicles, along with warnings by various Prophets, including: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Amos, Micah, and Zephaniah. The last mention of Moab and Ammon found in Zephaniah, refers to the ultimate destiny for these wicked enemies of Israel:

“I have heard the taunting of Moab And the revilings of the sons of Ammon, with which they have taunted My people and become arrogant against their territory. ‘Therefore, as I live,’ declares the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, ‘Surely Moab will be like Sodom

and the sons of Ammon like Gomorrah—a place possessed by nettles and salt pits, and a perpetual desolation. The remnant of My people will plunder them and the remainder of My nation will inherit them.’ This they will have in return for their pride, because they have taunted and become arrogant against the people of the LORD of hosts. The LORD will be terrifying to them, for He will starve all the gods of the earth; and all the coastlands of the nations will bow down to Him, everyone from his *own* place” (Zephaniah 2:8-11).

The final disposition of these enemies of the God of Israel, is very much like what Lot and his daughters were delivered from, when they fled from Sodom and Gomorrah. In some respects, one might conclude that a just God does not forget what has transpired down through the ages, and that eventually, His perfect justice will be served to all the created order.

At this point in my morning stroll through the Holy Scriptures, the consequences of sin were taking preeminence, as I searched for some relief from the disappointment of knowing that legalized, same-sex marriage, was now the law of the land in the country where I am residing. An apprehension for those who are celebrating the Supreme Court decision welled up in my heart, as I had a sincere concern for their salvation. Where was the grace that is so abounding with our Heavenly Father, who desires that no one should perish?

“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

As this Scripture came to mind, I was redirected to 2 Peter ch. 2, where I remember there is a unique description about “righteous” (or innocent) Lot. I found here an entire chapter, which applies perfectly to the dilemma that is now plaguing those who call upon the name of Yeshua, the Savior of the world. Here in this passage, the comparison between the righteous and the unrighteous is black and white, with the consequences of denying the Righteous One and His ways, eternally worse than if one had never known Him:

“But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in *their* greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; and *if* He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing *them* to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly *lives* thereafter; and *if* He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard *that* righteous man, while living among them, felt *his* righteous soul tormented day after day by *their* lawless deeds), *then* the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge the flesh in *its* corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties, whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord. But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed, suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you, having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children; forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the *son* of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but he received a rebuke for his own transgression, *for* a mute donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet. These are springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been re-

served. For speaking out arrogant *words* of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved. For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Yeshua the Messiah, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them. It has happened to them according to the true proverb, 'A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT,' and, 'A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire'" (2 Peter 2:1-22).

As I read through this final epistle from the Apostle Peter, I was struck by his explicit warnings, which in and of themselves, made a direct comparison between the unrighteous and the righteous. Of course, the false teachers, the false prophets, and eventually Balaam (a prophet for hire), are included among the unrighteous. These are people who are driven by fleshly desires (sensuality, licentiousness; 2 Peter 2:2, 18), who indulge the flesh (2 Peter 2:10), who are creatures of instinct (2 Peter 2:12), and are reserved for God's ultimate judgment (2 Peter 2:4). The comparison is to Noah as "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5), and "righteous" Lot, who "for by what he saw and heard...while living among them, felt *his* righteous soul tormented day after day by *their* lawless deeds" (2 Peter 2:8).

After noting the obvious comparison, Peter then concludes his warning with one of the most sobering statements. I find that what he says absolutely refutes the convenient doctrine, for many professing Believers, commonly referred to as "once saved always saved" or eternal security. Here in graphic terms, The Amplified Bible speaks about "loud boasts of folly" that "beguile" and "lure" with "lustful desires of the flesh" by the "promise of liberty" when instead, people become are "slaves of depravity and defilement":

"For uttering loud boasts of folly, they beguile and lure with lustful desires of the flesh those who are barely escaping from them who are wrongdoers. They promise them liberty, when they themselves are the slaves of depravity and defilement—for by whatever anyone is made inferior or worse or is overcome, to that [person or thing] he is enslaved. For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through [the full, personal] knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they again become entangled in them and are overcome, their last condition is worse [for them] than the first. For never to have obtained a [full, personal] knowledge of the way of righteousness would have been better for them than, having obtained [such knowledge], to turn back from the holy commandment which was [verbally] delivered to them. There has befallen them the thing spoken of in the true proverb, The dog turns back to his own vomit, and, The sow is washed only to wallow again in the mire. [Prov. 26:11.]" (2 Peter 2:18-22, Amplified Bible).

Did you notice the conclusion in both versions referenced that "after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through knowledge of our Lord and Savior Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ), they **again** become entangled in them and **are overcome**, their last condition is worse than the first"? The final statement, "For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them" (2 Peter 2:20), causes one to wonder *if* the saving grace of the Messiah was fully understood and received. Peter's reference to Proverbs 26:11 is a definite reminder of the folly of a fool, who is wise in his or her own eyes:

"Like a dog that returns to its vomit is a fool who repeats his folly. Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him" (Proverbs 26:11-12).

Needless to say, reading through this passage of Scripture on *Shabbat* morning, given the decision of the Supreme Court made the previous day, was quite alarming. In fact, because I usually open up the *Shabbat* service at our local Messianic congregation with a "mini-drash" on the weekly Torah portion—I had prepared an additional few comments to share about what the Lord had shown me that morning in prayer and Scripture reading. In

particular, I wanted to focus on the need for every true Believer to be sensitive to their professing Christian family and friends, who are going to be rejoicing at the Court's decision. When I asked for a few more minutes to share what was on my heart regarding the events of the previous day and what it would mean for us as Believers, I was told that there were so many other announcements, prayers, special teachings, and presentations, that the mini-dash was postponed for that particular morning.

While disappointed that I was not going to be able to explain what I was discerning from the Lord, I instead began praying and interceding during the presentations, prayers, and praise and worship, hoping for a Spirit-led opportunity to share. But as I sat in silence, supplicating and weeping before the Father, the prompting from the Holy Spirit which I was waiting for, never came. Instead of sharing these Scriptures with the entire assembly, I simply was led to a few people after the service, to express my concern for what had transpired, as I referenced the Genesis 19 and 2 Peter 2 passages. It was not until I began to write this month's article, when I finally received confirmation from the Proverbs 16 passage noted above, that I realized how the Father wants us to handle the same-sex marriage decision with loved ones, friends, acquaintances, neighbors, and those we encounter in the marketplace. As Proverbs 16:31-33 appears in The Amplified Bible,

"The hoary head is a crown of beauty and glory if it is found in the way of righteousness (moral and spiritual rectitude in every area and relation). [Prov. 20:29.] **He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, he who rules his [own] spirit than he who takes a city.** The lot is cast into the lap, **but the decision is wholly of the Lord** [even the events that seem accidental are really ordered by Him]" (Proverbs 16:31-33, Amplified Bible).

As a person who has a "hoary" or gray head of hair, I was pleased to discover that aging in and of itself, is a byproduct of living a life that has at the very least, a measure of "righteousness." As the Hebrew states it, *b'derek tzedaqah* (בְּדֶרֶךְ צְדָקָה). By living a life that is pleasing to the Lord, the odds are greater that one will live long enough to have the sign of age found in graying or even white hair.

How should we as Believers react to the decision that was made by the Supreme Court? Our tendency will be to react quickly with condemnation and frustration. Yet according to James the Just, the direction to those who are better than the mighty, is to be "slow to anger." James uses the wisdom of waiting on the Lord, to expound upon other attributes, such as us making sure that we are faithful to live effective lives of obedience to the Torah of liberty:

"***This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.*** Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does" (James 1:19-25).

The admonition to become effectual doers of God's Word rather than forgetful hearers, is something that every Believer should seek to be and do. *So, given the Supreme Court decision, how should Messiah followers react?* Certainly not in any kind of human anger, an emotion which has a distinct tendency to leave humility in the dust!

It is instead imperative that we react in love, by "**ruling our spirit**," listening to the arguments and pleadings of those who have been duped by the majority opinion of not only the Court, but public opinion at large. Next, as one listens intently to whatever the arguments or protestations may be, surrounding this unwise ruling, we should each be slow to speak, and certainly be slow to anger. In fact, it would be best for us to tune into the

small, quiet, voice which resonates in our spirit, in order to speak what the Holy Spirit wants to say through us to those whom we encounter with a different opinion. Perhaps the Lord will then use us to share what He wants to share to others, who have been beguiled by this blatant attack upon the sanctity of holy matrimony. But we need to be sensitive, because those whom we encounter, may be on the very precipice of denying the righteousness that comes exclusively from belief in the sacrificial work of the Messiah. For Yeshua, like the bronze serpent which was lifted up in the desert, to ward off the deadly sting of the venomous snakes (Numbers 21:6-9), reminds everyone that He did not come to judge the world, but that people might be saved through belief in His atonement for sin. IN fact, He is our righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21):

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:14-18).

Finally, the insight I was receiving from Proverbs 16, was coming to a close, with this last comment that I had previously thought only applied to casting lots, throwing dice, or games of chance—anything but what the second half of the proverb clearly states:

“**The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD**” (Proverbs 16:33).

The Lord states that every decision is from Him. This would seem to include decisions which He allows or permits—decisions with which I might disagree—but are ultimately and sovereignly from Him. This includes the recent decision by the Supreme Court, as God is surely in the process of testing many to see how loyal they are to Him and to His Word.

I am confident that the Lord did not want Adam and Eve to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, *but* He allowed them to eat from it. I am sure He did not want Lot's daughters to get their father drunk, or Joseph to be sold into slavery by his brothers, or Paul to be a serial killer of the early followers of the Messiah... Yet frequently, human evil can be used as a means for God to bring forth good things (Genesis 50:20), as He works things together for good to those who love Him (Romans 8:28). Every decision is ultimately allowed by the Lord, regardless of the consequences, both good and bad.

I finally came to terms with this reality through the blessing of reading His Word, knowing it is a living Word which judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart:

“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do” (Hebrews 4:12-13).

There is no creature hidden from His sight, and all things are open and lay bare to His eyes! I understand *more fully now* than before, that a tectonic reverberation in the Heavenly realm has occurred, and that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is providentially in control of all things that are transpiring in His Creation. **Nothing happens without Him allowing it to happen.** This includes a Supreme Court decision which will be used by Him to test His people from this day forward. In many regards, the paradigm shift that took place in the spiritual world on Friday, June 26, 2015, is a demarcation line, or righteous divide, drawn in the shifting sands of the belief systems of Christianity and Judaism.

My greatest concern is when the attacks from loved ones come, and the reviling for standing with the Messiah comes, Believers will react in the flesh—because He said persecution and hate would come:

“Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me” (Matthew 5:11).

“If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before *it hated* you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me” (John 15:18-21).

Thankfully, the Scriptures are replete with advice from those who endured various trials and tribulations of following Israel’s Messiah in the First Century, as the Apostle Peter reminded his readers that judgment begins in the household of God, and that followers of the Messiah should anticipate being reviled for Him:

“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Messiah, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. **If you are reviled for the name of Messiah, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.** Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. For *it is* time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what *will be* the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? AND IF IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS SAVED, WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS MAN AND THE SINNER [Proverbs 11:31]? Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right” (1 Peter 4:12-19).

To conclude this rather lengthy article, I want to summarize with another proverb, which draws us back to the context of where Peter left us above. He understood that the “righteous” will be saved or rewarded on Earth, with the rhetorical question, **What will become of the godless and the sinner?**

“He who trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like the *green* leaf. **He who troubles his own house will inherit wind,** and the foolish will be servant to the wisehearted. The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, **and he who is wise wins souls.** If the righteous will be rewarded in the earth, **how much more the wicked and the sinner!**” (Proverbs 11:28-31).

Here we are reminded of **the righteous divide** that has and will forever exist between those who trust in their own strength, riches, or even self-righteousness—with those who are simply righteous by faith in the Holy One of Israel. We are warned that we will inherit wind, if we do not handle our interactions with those who do not understand the attack on the institution of marriage lovingly, especially when it comes to those in our immediate family, who may be fooled by the prevailing majority opinion of the world, and even some who claim to be Believers. Instead, when confronted or reviled by loved ones or others, we need to be humble, as wise as serpents, but gentle as doves (Matthew 10:16), while we listen intently to the voice of the Holy Spirit. We need to be properly positioned so that we can share what the Spirit wants us to share to those confused souls. In so doing, perhaps the fruit of righteous and wise people, will be many won for the Kingdom of God, **who in Yeshua’s righteousness alone,** learn to properly employ God’s immutable Word. Prayerfully, these searching souls will come to know and cling only to the Messiah Yeshua, who was lifted up and died on a tree, that He may extend eternal life to all who believe on Him for their salvation.

In the meanwhile, as we entrust ourselves to the faithful Creator by seeking to do what is right in His eyes, may we continue to pray for our country, our faith communities, our families, and for all who are called to advance the Kingdom of God, until the Messianic restoration of all things...

MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS UPDATE

July 2015

Dear Friends:

Two weeks ago I returned from my family's annual reunion in Gulf Shores, Alabama—and it seems that I have not been able to catch my breath since then!



By now, many of you know that on the Sunday morning after I got back, the website domain tnonline.net was thefted by an international scammer. After consulting with IT and attorney friends, our choice was to either register tnonline.com or .org—**or** go with another website. We chose to register **messianicapologetics.net**, and with it begin a critical transition with Theology News Network—TNN Online becoming **Messianic Apologetics**. This new name very much reflects what we are doing in 2015, and will better compliment the website of Outreach Israel Ministries.

Much of the transition that has been taking place has involved the tedious changing of graphics, non-time sensitive references in written materials, and then the overall troubleshooting that goes with it. I am estimating that the bulk of this should be completed by the end of this month.

Please do keep me in your prayers during this busy Summer season! One of my most significant gifts is the ability to analyze Bible passages thoroughly, if not over-analyze them. This can also be a weakness, if I have just *a little too much work* placed before me all at once... If I do not carefully pace myself during seasons like this, I can burnout, get migraine headaches, and not adequately rest.

While as I write this I may seem a bit overwhelmed at some of the positive changes taking place, once the Messianic Apologetics name is fully integrated into our ministry publications—work does indeed fully resume on our projects for 2015! There are around fifteen Bible passages remaining in the forthcoming *Messianic Sabbath Helper*. The notes for the Wednesday Night Bible Study are now resuming with 1 Corinthians ch. 9, meaning that the study is numerically about half-way complete. I have a number of designated legal pads and folders on my desk, for some other future publications—and I am indeed receiving a wide number of inquiries by different people on Facebook and by e-mail, about important aspects of the nature of Yeshua.

Until next month...

J.K. McKee