

# OIM UPDATE

June 2015

This past month has been dedicated to plan and then celebrate the wedding of our daughter Maggie, who since she was three years old, has been raised in the Messianic environment which our family was drawn into twenty years ago. At an early age she mastered Davidic dancing, and became an inspirational teacher and mentor, who modeled grace and sincere worship, as she tirelessly praised the Holy One of Israel in song and dance. By God's grace, she delivered her bat mitzvah teaching at a *Shavuot* gathering in 2006, with a dramatic, personal salvation experience a year later. However, despite being a dedicated Messianic follower of Yeshua, when she matriculated at the University of Oklahoma in 2010, the lack of a Messianic campus ministry, prompted her to migrate to The Wesley, a United Methodist Ministry at OU. It was there that she met her future husband, Taylor, who dated her for four years before their nuptials were commemorated on *Shavuot*/Pentecost here in North Texas.

## **Taylor and Maggie Willetts**

Consequently, when we engaged our local Messianic Jewish rabbi to officiate at the wedding, we were able to witness in a unique way the reality of the one new humanity (Ephesians 2:15), by combining elements of Jewish and Christian wedding traditions and vows. Needless to say, from a

family commissioned to accelerate the long-prophesied restoration of all things (Acts 3:21), our daughter's "Methianic" service was an awesome testimony! It demonstrated to all in attendance, the profound reality of the ultimate marriage of the bride of the Messiah, composed of people from all tongues, tribes, and nations, with Yeshua the Messiah.

Coincidentally, while we were all being blessed by the sacredness of the ceremony, we are reminded that the God-given ordinance of "holy matrimony" is currently under attack around the globe. Whether it is voting results about same sex marriage in Catholic Ireland, or anticipation about what the United States Supreme Court is going to rule upon this month, we know that people hostile to the Word of God are working diligently to change the ancient definition of marriage. In fact, the full frontal assault on the foundational institution which our Creator established for human beings to propagate the species in Genesis 2:24, has gotten to the point that the attackers claim that those who adhere to God's eternal ways are simply ignorant and wicked bigots. So, with the obvious spiritual battles raging to redefine marriage and replace Biblical mores with secular humanistic beliefs, I was prompted to write this month's lead article entitled, "**Raise to Release,**" as a means to express many of my thoughts throughout this past month, and the blessing of trusting and obeying the Lord, in order to receive His blessings.

Finally, because we know "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*" (Ephesians 6:12), we are extremely grateful for your prayerful and financial support of the **Theological Defense Trust**. We understand that the apologetic and stabilizing work that we do, to produce written materials for the broad Messianic movement, is critical to help accelerate the understanding of those who the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) is drawing into this faith community. Additionally, the **Prison Ministry Free Book Fund** allows 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!

*"May 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

# RAISE TO RELEASE

by Mark Huey

It is difficult to fathom how people exist, survive, and seemingly thrive in this fallen world without the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit and God's Word to be "a lamp to the feet and a light to the path" (Psalm 119:105). But I do know how people exist in this way, because I remember the years before I was saved at twenty-seven, and how in my search for truth, I could be totally whipsawed by the spirit of this world, my flesh, and the wiles of the Devil. These entities were all worthy adversaries—which apart from the grace of God—would still be dominating my thoughts, my words, and my actions. But praise the Lord that in His mercy toward me, I can be counted among those to whom the good news or gospel was sent. I am reminded of one of the principal missions that our Heavenly Father gave the Apostle Paul:

"...and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me" (Acts 26:17b-18).

By His grace, I have been chosen to become a part of His family. I have been called out of spiritual darkness into His marvelous light:

"But you are A CHOSEN RACE [Isaiah 43:20, LXX; Deuteronomy 7:6; 10:15], A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD [Exodus 19:6; Isaiah 61:6], A HOLY NATION [Exodus 19:6], A PEOPLE FOR *God's* OWN POSSESSION [Isaiah 43:21, LXX; Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 4:20; 7:6; 14:2], so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him [Isaiah 43:21] who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY [Hosea 2:23]" (1 Peter 2:9-10).

Consequently for thirty-seven years, this unmerited enlightenment has resulted in an unrelenting pursuit to know the Holy One, His ways, and to learn how to walk not by sight, but by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7). Some twenty years ago, despite looking through a mirror dimly (1 Corinthians 13:12), the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) revealed the critical importance of returning to the ancient paths, embodied in the entire written counsel of God from Genesis to Revelation, and the Messianic lifestyle and perspective which anticipates the prophesied restoration of all things (Acts 3:21):

"Thus says the LORD, 'Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; and you will find rest for your souls. But they said, "We will not walk *in it*"' (Jeremiah 6:16).

Hence, a systematic study of God's Torah, and a desire to be conformed to the image of Israel's Yeshua, has been a significant fulfillment of the Bible verses I quoted, when I made a public testimony of my faith in Yeshua, at my Believer's immersion in 1978:

"For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become con-*

formed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified” (Romans 8:29-30).

I can personally attest that when people are led to return to the ancient paths found in the Holy Scriptures, and to walk in them by faith, there is indeed blessed rest for the soul affirmed by His answer to prayers. The Holy One of Israel is intimately aware of even the smallest details of our lives, and when it is our desire to give glory to Him—as a testimony of our belief and trust in Him—He is faithful to cooperate! This is the witness I want to share, as my wife Margaret and I have sought to follow God’s Instruction for rearing children by following this wise proverb, in order to release through Biblical marriage, the children we have raised:

**“Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it”** (Proverbs 22:6).

In recent months, before, during, and after the wedding of our youngest daughter on *Shavuot* or the Feast of Weeks, I have been confronted with many thoughts that are a direct by product of the faith our family has placed in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and His inerrant Word. After all, it is from His life-giving instruction manual that humanity has derived, and for the most part maintained, the institution of marriage. Upon this, the propagation of the species and fulfillment of the Adamic covenant to be fruitful and multiply, is based:

“God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, **‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth’**” (Genesis 1:27-28).

In the Creator’s infinite wisdom, He had Moses convey early in the text of Genesis, the profound description of what God intended to be the principal means to achieve the aforementioned mandate to multiply, fill the Earth, and subdue it with these words:

**“For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh”** (Genesis 2:24).

Obviously, even before there was a physical father or mother—because Adam was fashioned by God from the dust of the Earth (Genesis 2:7), and Eve from Adam’s side (Genesis 2:21-23)—the Maker required one man and one woman to procreate through the intimacy of physical relations. So from the onset of human activity, and in order to fulfill the command to fill the Earth and subdue it, God instructed new couples, and the male in particular, to leave the confines of his parents, become intimate with his female wife, and through the separation and formation of a new family, reproduce and perpetuate the species.

While this makes sense in every regard, the institution of marriage has always been complicated because of the fallen nature of human beings. Hence,

in centuries following Moses compiling these words found in Genesis about what became the sacred institution of marriage, the Messiah of Israel (God in the flesh) was confronted with a probing question from some of His detractors about the proscribed means to terminate marriages, known as divorce. Here in this passage from Matthew 19, Yeshua quotes the words of Moses, by linking it with the concept of “male and female,” thus further affirming that proper, Biblical marriage, is indeed the sacred union of one man with one woman:

“Some Pharisees came to Yeshua, testing Him and asking, ‘Is it lawful *for a man* to divorce his wife for any reason at all?’ And He answered and said, ‘Have you not read that He who created *them* from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE [Genesis 1:27; 5:2], and said, “FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH [Genesis 2:24]?” So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.’ They said to Him, ‘Why then did Moses command to GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND *her* AWAY [Deuteronomy 24:1]?’ He said to them, ‘Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; **but from the beginning it has not been this way.** And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery” (Matthew 19:3-9).

Without going into all of the details of the nuptial vows and the marriage teaching or drash spoken at our daughter’s wedding ceremony, by our Messianic Jewish rabbi, there was reference to another confirming witness from the Holy Scriptures. In this often-quoted passage during marriages from the Apostle Paul, Moses’ concise words about what has become the formal institution of marriage, was offered:

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Messiah also loved the [assembly] and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the [assembly] in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Messiah also *does* the [assembly], because we are members of His body. FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH [Genesis 2:24]. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Messiah and the [assembly]. Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must *see to it* that she respects her husband” (Ephesians 5:22-33).

Margaret and I have always taken the Word of God seriously, and endeavored to train all of our children in the way they should go through the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). We, like many other believing

parents, have prayed for godly spouses. God answered our prayers with Maggie, and she was able to be joined in holy matrimony with the “unknown young man” that her mother and I had prayed faithfully for over the years. As a result, we were both confident that she could be released into his care, and the two of them be joined together as they establish their new home, and in the Father’s time, have the joy and blessing of having their own children.

The great testimony for us as a family was to host family and friends, who are not necessarily Believers, or are evangelical Believers but widely unaware of the Messianic perspective we embraced two decades ago. This unique setting allowed this sacred union to be a witness of how Messianic Judaism and Christianity can come together and glorify God’s Word and affirm His ways for a marriage between a young man and a young woman. In the case of our daughter, as it has been with all of our children, by adhering to God’s ways regarding chastity—despite our culture’s incessant promotion of illicit relations—our daughter was able to present herself without spot or wrinkle. This plague of immorality is a challenge which today is lamentably very difficult for many young people to avoid, in yet another wicked and perverted generation, just like all previous generations which have preceded it. But praise the Lord that because our family has adhered to God’s Word, and lovingly taught the Torah and its precepts, statutes, and ordinances to our children—the Holy One of Israel has protected them from the powerful influences of the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Only God’s mercy and grace toward our family could have answered our prayers and made this happen!

As indicated earlier, the wedding weekend was an opportunity for our immediate family to represent the Holy One of Israel to a wide array of people gathered for the festivities. Providentially, the Lord allowed us to convey the love of the Messiah in a variety of ways, through conversations that centered on the Biblical uniqueness of this wedding which incorporated elements of Judaism and Christianity. But additionally, the Father blessed us with a weather related physical manifestation, which categorically demonstrated His love for our daughter and our family. Let me explain.

Several weeks prior to the wedding date (24 May), my daughter asked me to suggest a song that we could dance to, after the traditional first dance of the new bride and groom. Of course, in this instance the father of the bride (me) is not necessarily tuned into the latest songs of the current generation, and I am certainly not aware of any of the new fangled dance steps of the Millennial generation. So I was faced with quite a quandary, just to come up with a song. But after putting my mind to it and first suggesting a song that would not be appropriate, and then thinking back to the 1970s when disco dancing was the rage, I concluded that a fast dance, cutting the proverbial rug ala Saturday Night Fever, given our daughter’s lengthy wedding dress, would not work. So in a bit of an inspiration, as I was about to go to bed one evening, and not wanting to disappoint my insistent daughter, I thought back to the soul music of the 1960s. I remembered a song by the Temptations, entitled “My Girl,” primarily because of the slow tempo. When I mentioned it to Maggie, she

even said she knew the song, because for some reason, the Millennial generation is listening to the songs of the sixties, probably because they can understand the lyrics!

After receiving the approval from my pleased daughter, I put my head on the pillow, and tried to remember the lyrics as I was nodding off to sleep. After a few seconds, my brain somehow recalled the opening stanza that begins, *"I've got sunshine on a cloudy day. When it's cold outside I've got the month of May."* Upon recollecting these words, I shot up out of bed and went into my daughter's room, announcing without any hesitation, "Maggie, I believe this is not only the right song, but that God loves you soooo much that He is going to give you sunshine on a cloudy day in the month of May, when your wedding day arrives on May 24th!" Now for most people who are familiar with Texas weather, this does not sound like such a big deal. But here in North Texas for the months of April and May, the rainfall and lack of sunshine has exceeded historical records. And because the wedding was scheduled to be outside in the open air under a pergola, the pressure was definitely on as the wedding day was rapidly approaching. Needless to say, for the two weeks prior to the wedding, I was confidently declaring to family and friends that through all of the inclement weather, somehow the Lord was going to bring sunshine to make this wedding a special day where He could be glorified.

As the day of the wedding approached (which was on *Shavuot*/Pentecost), the cloud shrouded skies would not recede. Everyone was checking the Weather Channel or the different apps on their phones, to find out what the forecasts were for the Sunday of the wedding. The constant topic of conversation revolved around not only the threat of torrential rain, but the hilarity of the fact that the weather forecasters were altering their predictions almost hourly. *100% to 80% to 60% to 100% chance of rain and back and forth for the days ahead*, as the icons of clouds with lightning bolts—and absolutely no sunshine, or at most minimal sunshine—dominated the airwaves. But despite the dire predictions, I was confidently assuring not only Maggie and Margaret, but anyone who would listen to my off key attempts to sing *"My Girl"* and remind them that there was going to be sunshine on a cloudy day in the month of May. I am sure many just rolled their eyes, as I said over and over again that God loved Maggie so much, that He was going to bring the sunshine. Enough said and I prayed....

Well as the Lord would have it, the wisdom to have the wedding inside because of the never-ending possibility of rain, prevailed when the rehearsal day arrived, and the decision was made to move the ceremony inside the building where the reception was to be held. At first I was disappointed, because the image I had in my mind—of the sun bursting through the clouds and illuminating the wedding altar at the time the vows were being made—was just not going to materialize. But I continued to pray for sunshine, especially since Margaret's wedding day to her first husband Kim, in 1975, had been disrupted by a torrential downpour that prevented the photographer

from shooting any outside post wedding photos. However, through the rehearsal dinner, and even despite the early morning deluge of rain on the wedding day, I continued to ask the Father for some sunshine on a cloudy day in May.

The late afternoon ceremony came off like clockwork. Moving the nuptials inside was actually a blessing, because the setting was much more intimate, with minimal distractions—because the focal point was on the *chupah* built indoors, with flowers cascading from the upright posts. This allowed the guests to really listen to the message of what a traditional, Biblical, Judeo-Christian wedding is all about. Thankfully the weather began to break enough, so that the attendees to the wedding did not have to arrive in a downpour—or even carry an umbrella—because it appeared that despite the clouds, the rain had for the moment, subsided. Then as the reception commenced, the clouds outside began to dissipate to the point that blue skies emerged from weeks hidden by the overcast skies. By the time the reception was going strong with dancing and photos being taken, the sun was out in all of its glory! In fact, the late afternoon sun was ideal lighting for the photographer, as the wet greenery of the trees, grass, and golf course setting glistened in the background. Needless to say, I was more than delighted, as I went from person to person who had heard my earlier declarations throughout the weekend about the “sunshine on a cloudy day,” and I was able to give all the glory to our Heavenly Father for His blessing to Maggie and her new husband!

In conclusion, I suppose I am moved to share this testimony simply because Margaret and I, and our children that we have raised to the best of our ability according to the Word of God, **are forever being blessed by the Father’s love for us.** He knows that we, as humans fashioned in His image—yet plagued by the sin of our predecessors Adam and Eve—are doing our best to comply with His Word, as it has illuminated the trail upon which we have traversed for these many years. The Holy One knows that we are going to make mistakes along the way, but because He loves us so much, He mercifully conveys His lovingkindness in ways that at times are even communicated through His Creation. In this particular case, He simply parted the water soaked clouds for a few hours, so that the sun would shine on our family, so we could without hesitation give Him all the glory for His faithfulness to us.

Finally, our testimony of faith and walk in the Messiah before family and friends, has always been somewhat perplexing to those who do not yet understand who the Holy One is, or what He is doing among the created order. Some have questioned why our family is doing all of this “Jewish” or “Old Testament” stuff. My answer is very succinct to them, or for that matter anyone who is concerned about why we desire to adhere to the Word of God, as it has been preserved down through the ages. Many reasons for faithfully embracing the whole counsel of God from Genesis to Revelation can be found in the opening verses of Deuteronomy 28, where the Holy One through Moses describes some of the blessings of obedience to His Word:

“Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful

to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. **All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you if you obey the LORD your God: Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country. Blessed shall be the offspring of your body and the produce of your ground and the offspring of your beasts, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock. Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.** The LORD shall cause your enemies who rise up against you to be defeated before you; they will come out against you one way and will flee before you seven ways. **The LORD will command the blessing upon you in your barns and in all that you put your hand to, and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God gives you.** The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, as He swore to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways. So all the peoples of the earth will see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they will be afraid of you. The LORD will make you abound in prosperity, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your beast and in the produce of your ground, in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you. **The LORD will open for you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand;** and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. The LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you only will be above, and you will not be underneath, if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I charge you today, to observe *them* carefully, and do not turn aside from any of the words which I command you today, to the right or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them (Deuteronomy 28:1-14).

Note how the blessings of the Lord includes the promise **“to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand.”** I am convinced that He not only gives the rain, but takes it away, when appropriate, as He did in answer to our prayers. In a like manner, I am confident that because we have endeavored to train up our children in the way they should go, that they will indeed continue in His ways, and in the path that He has determined for each of them, **as they diligently serve Him and the purposes of His Kingdom!**

May you likewise be blessed, as you seek to glorify Him through obedience to His Word! May He reveal Himself more fully through whatever means, so that you can rest assured that your faith in Him and His ways in not in vain. *To Him be the glory, forever and ever, Amen!*

# TNN ONLINE EDITOR'S UPDATE

June 2015

Dear Friends:

This past month has been an extremely exciting, but also exhausting time, for my family! My youngest sister Maggie got married, and with it I got to be one of the hosts as family and friends from across North Texas, Oklahoma, and the U.S., came here to Dallas for the wedding. It was certainly a weekend we will never forget! Given our closely-knit family, with most of us now living in the DFW Metroplex, I am only now realizing how much we have been preoccupied with Maggie's wedding the past year or so. With it now over, I am sure that I will be looking back on how dominated our subconscious thoughts were, knowing that this event was soon to take place.



It is at these times of important family transition, that we all necessarily consider where we are, what we are doing, and what we have been doing. Ten years ago, I had just finished my first semester at Asbury Theological Seminary (2005), and with it had gone through a number of key, theological and spiritual changes with how I read and approached the Bible and Biblical controversies. I had also experienced a significant brunt of criticism during a private meeting with various "leaders" in the independent Hebrew/Hebraic Roots movement, who did not think that I would amount to very much as a teacher of Messianic people—at least for several decades. The result of that meeting in June 2005 was that in July 2005 I would be starting the TNN Online Wednesday Night Bible Study podcast. With the multiple volumes our ministry has since produced in our *Practical Messianic* series of commentaries, written for Messianic people and their needs, **I am hardly someone who is being ineffectual in my service to our faith community.**

Still, looking back on the past ten years or so, there are still files I have open on different topics, that only now do I sense that I am going to be able to focus in on. During the Summer months, I will be finishing off the *Messianic Sabbath Helper*, for a Fall release. Our 1 Corinthians Bible study will continue, likely for completion at the end of the year or right into 2016. This Fall, I am planning to start work on a lengthy project, *Salvation on the Line: The Nature of Yeshua and His Divinity*, which actually goes back all the way to 2003. I have been collecting notes, books, commentaries, and even Bible versions for many years—and especially in the past six months or so—preparing for this important apologetic study. This will be geared toward firmly defending Yeshua the Messiah as the uncreated, eternal Son of God, and engaged with various arguments and statements which circulate around the broad Messianic community, either for or against Yeshua's Divinity.

Until next month...

J.K. McKee