

# OIM UPDATE

June 2013

Now that the commemoration of *Shavuot* or Pentecost has come and gone, the long, hot Summer months leading toward the Fall feasts of the Lord are upon us. For Outreach Israel Ministries, TNN Online, and TNN Press, this season means a continuing time to research, write, and publish more informative and insightful publications on a variety of appropriate Messianic-oriented topics. From the feedback we receive, we know that the Holy One of Israel continues to use our materials to accelerate the maturation process for people not only being introduced to the Messianic community of faith, but also others who want to grow in their walk of faith. We highly recommend that you obtain some of the **thirty-five TNN Press titles** that can be used for personal growth, or given to others who may want to know more about this present move of the Holy Spirit, which is in the process of completing the prophecies regarding the restoration of all things (cf. Acts 3:19-21).

This past month has been filled with what we have affectionately labeled “**small victories**,” which continue to encourage our ministerial efforts. These blessings include some positive response to the OIM Newsletter bulk mailing last month. Since we had not contacted a number of people on our mailing list for a number of years, when some realized what we had been producing, they communicated joyful amazement. Many remembered that our approach in teaching has always been to write on the various Messianic subjects from a loving, balanced, and scholarly perspective. And quite noticeably, some were delighted to be reintroduced to publications that remain true to the Holy Writ. In addition, our ongoing efforts via the **Theological Defense Trust**, to now bolster positive book reviews on the titles available for sale on Amazon.com, has produced a significant rise in some titles to near the top of the listings in its Messianic Judaism Kindle section. In so doing, our titles are getting much needed exposure on a website that has significant worldwide outreach. Thanks to each of you who continue to support the trust—and especially to all who have taken the time to write a book review—because they are definitely having a positive impact! Finally, our **Prison Ministry Outreach-Free Book Fund** is continuing to receive many requests from prisoners in the U.S. Penal System.

The lead article this month was inspired by a great deal of personal consternation, with me being reminded almost daily, about the continued attacks upon the Judeo-Christian values crucial for the formation of Western civilization. Since I believe most of our readers are concerned about many of the cultural battles that are raging on multiple fronts, the title “**Cornerstone Foundation**,” simply reflects the answer I was given while imploring the Lord for reasons to the increasing challenges. Hopefully, as a people who rely upon the veracity of the Holy Scriptures and the sovereign will of our Eternal God, a fuller understanding of why the war for the culture appears to be lost should instead encourage each and every one of us to rely more and more upon the Holy Spirit, to advance the Kingdom of God on Earth as it is in Heaven.

Until the restoration of all things...

Mark Huey

# CORNERSTONE FOUNDATION

by Mark Huey

For almost 3,500 years, the writings attributed to Moses found in the Torah (or Pentateuch), have been the foundational building blocks of what has been labeled the “Judeo-Christian” worldview. For over two millennia, Western Civilization has developed laws, institutions, and societal mores that are derived predominantly from the legal, moral, and ethical principles recorded in these ancient texts (along with the balance of what has been determined to be the Holy Scriptures). The historical religious institutions developed by Judaism and Christianity generally recognize the authenticity of these writings, as coming directly or indirectly from the Creator God of the Heavens and Earth. But now, more than ever before in the history of Western civilization, Judeo-Christian values are being relentlessly challenged from every conceivable direction. The “culture war” for the hearts and souls of humanity is seemingly, from a human perspective, being won by the multitude of godless maturing “-isms,” that are collectively overwhelming the marketplace of ideas. Evil is considered good, while good is considered evil. What has been historically regarded as “sinful behavior” is no longer recognized as such, because moral “absolutes” are no longer considered in vogue.

It appears that the rapid declension of society has moved from the slippery slope to a virtual freefall, prompting many to conclude that Yeshua the Messiah is on the verge of His return. But if one believes the Messiah’s recorded words, the degradation of humanity is going to have to get much worse before He comes back. In fact, when asked about His eventual return by His Disciples in the Olivet Discourse, Yeshua stated that prior to His coming the world would be very similar to what it was like during the days of Noah, preceding the Flood:

**“For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah.** For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be” (Matthew 24:37-39).

To understand how depraved humanity was during Noah’s generation, one verse from Genesis summarizes the degree of wickedness that was evident then:

**“Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”** (Genesis 6:5).

While it might be difficult for some to imagine humanity becoming significantly worse, the world is not yet to the point where “every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time” (NIV). Although, given some of what you read and hear about in the media, it seems to be going this way quite rapidly!

If you are a Believer, watching wickedness grow and seemingly thrive at alarming rates is very disconcerting. It could cause you to pause and ask the simple question: *Why Lord?* In so doing, and by searching His Word, some answers to this gnawing question just might surface. After all, the Creator of the Universe has a definite plan for His Creation, and in His sovereign providential will, what one sees transpiring at **any point in time**, is ultimately a part of His plan, even when it appears that the forces of evil are prevailing. Regardless of the current challenging circumstances in the battle for the Judeo-Christian influenced Western culture, a Believer’s individual responsibility is to daily be about the work of advancing His Kingdom in the here and now, with whatever gifts, talents, and resources the Lord has graciously given to each and every one of His children.

As the attacks on the Judeo-Christian worldview persist with skirmishes seemingly being lost with increasing regularity, my question *Why Lord?* generated the thought provoking image of two words found in the construction industry: **cornerstone** and **founda-**

tion. These two illustrative words led me to reflect and ask some additional questions: Is it possible that the temporary rejection of the **cornerstone** Yeshua by the Jewish people and Judaism, and the lack of a solid Torah **foundation** by Christians and Christianity in general, result in serious institutional structural problems, and be the substantial reasons why it appears the culture war is being lost? After all, physical structures, which do not have their cornerstone and foundation in proper order, are unable to withstand the pressures of the elements over time. Would not spiritual ecclesiastical institutions with inherent structural defects *also* suffer from incessant, invisible attacks, which are being waged by the wicked spiritual forces of darkness in the spiritual realm, resulting in societal turmoil?

“For 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).

While pondering these questions and visualizing the spiritual fissures and defects both in Judaism, with its wholesale rejection of *the* cornerstone Yeshua, and Christianity, with a widescale lack of a solid foundation in the Torah—the image of the Leaning Tower of Pisa came to mind. This discomfoting thought then forced me to turn to the Word of God in order to try and discern what the Scriptures had to declare about the Cornerstone. My first thoughts immediately went to the Apostolic Writings (Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10-11; and Luke 20:17) where Yeshua quoted from Psalm 118:22-23 to His detractors, and explained how the builders of the house will reject the cornerstone. But before focusing on Matthew’s account, I turned to Psalm 118:22 to ascertain the fuller context of Yeshua’s reference, which categorically indicated that He was *the* Cornerstone which would ultimately be rejected by the builders of the house. In the immediate context of v. 22, I was pleasantly relieved that in v. 21, the Psalmist declares that he was to give thanks for His answers:

“I shall give thanks to You, for You have answered me, and You have become my salvation [*v'tehi-li l'yeshuah*, וְתִהְיֶה-לִּי לְיִשׁוּעָה]. **The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner stone.** This is the LORD's doing; It is marvelous in our eyes” (Psalm 118:21-23).

Then to further relieve some of my concerns about these mental images of Judaism and Christianity with serious structural defects, in v. 23, it is stated that the rejection of the Chief Cornerstone just happens to be a part of the Lord’s doing or His plan for His Creation. Furthermore, it is marvelous in the eyes of those who will understand that it has always been a part of His ultimate plan for the builders of the house to reject the Cornerstone for a period of time, in order to allow the gospel to go forth to all the nations of the world. As it is more fully explained by the Apostle Paul in Romans chs. 9-11, the temporary rejection, of Yeshua the Messiah by the corporate Jewish people, has always been a part of God’s plan for the ages.

After being reminded by the Scriptural confirmation that God’s plan for the ages included the rejection of the Cornerstone by the builders of the house, the fuller context of Psalm 118 begins and ends with an identical verse (1 and 29) that should bring joy to all followers of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who read and memorize it for meditation and recitation: “Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His lovingkindness is everlasting!” A favorite song of praise came to mind, and after singing it a few times in my head, I next noticed that Psalm 118 (purported by some to be at the center of the Scriptural record) is juxtaposed between the shortest Psalm, Psalm 117, which encourages *all* nations and peoples to praise the Lord:

“Praise the LORD, all nations; laud Him, all peoples! For His lovingkindness is great toward us, and the truth of the LORD is everlasting. Praise the LORD!” (Psalm 117:1-2).

Psalm 118 is also followed by the longest Psalm, Psalm 119 (one hundred seventy-six verses), with twenty-two eight verse stanzas that use the Hebrew *alef-bet* in order to sys-

tematically meditate upon the Torah. I do not think that this location was by chance, but ultimately orchestrated by the Holy Spirit, who down through the ages has guided certain people to recognize, canonize, and assemble the Holy Scriptures. Interestingly, because the subject of the rejection or acceptance of the Cornerstone Yeshua is a critical component of the faith institutions developed in Judaism and Christianity, perhaps the Holy One has these three Psalms in succession for His eventual Divine purposes...

Psalms 113-118 are among the traditional passages read by observant Jews in the Great Hallel on joyous occasions like Passover, *Shavuot*, and *Sukkot* and other times. The often-repeated message about the rejection of the Cornerstone, to attempt and constantly reach those in the Jewish community via their liturgical readings and prayers, seems profound. In a like manner, Psalm 117 encourages the nations and all the people of the world to praise the Lord for His lovingkindness and truth, and is a continual reminder that the truth of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will ultimately be declared by all people groups and nations. On the other hand, after looking at Psalm 118, Psalm 119 has repeated exhortations to meditate and contemplate the laws of God found in the Torah, which are the very foundational principles of both Judaism and Christianity. Perhaps the Lord, by linking these three Psalms together in unique ways when they are read and studied, has over the years, been faithfully reminding many Jewish people to reconsider *the* Cornerstone—while subtly challenging Christians to think about a more intense interest in studying the Torah. For it is declared by the Prophet Isaiah that His Word would not return empty without accomplishing what He desires, in the context of an unknown nation that does not know Him, which will run to Him due to ways and thoughts that are beyond human understanding:

**“Behold, you will call a nation you do not know, and a nation which knows you not will run to you, because of the LORD your God, even the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified you. Seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the LORD, and He will have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. ‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,’ declares the LORD. ‘For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding *in the matter* for which I sent it”** (Isaiah 55:5-11).

Certainly, what the Lord has done and is doing with these three Psalms, in succession in the Psalter, is an attempt to keep those seeking Him reminded of not only *the* Cornerstone Yeshua—but the absolute importance of the foundation of Biblical faith!

In turning to the Synoptic Gospel accounts (Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10-11; and Luke 20:17) where Yeshua quoted from Psalm 118:22-23, it is apparent that He was absolutely declaring that He was *the* Cornerstone which would be rejected by the builders of the house. However, because of the profundity of what Yeshua was declaring, it was not a flippant statement. But instead, His categorical declaration was prefaced by a series of parables and typical Hebraic exchanges (answering a question with a question), as the ultimate source of His authority was being questioned by the religious leaders. In Matthew 21:23-46, Yeshua’s parabolic style of teaching follows the patterns established by the ancient Prophets, by fulfilling the prophecy found in Psalm 78:2 and mentioned in Matthew 13:35 regarding the Messiah. Following is the first exchange in Matthew 21:23-32:

**“When He entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him while He was teaching, and said, ‘By what authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority?’ Yeshua said to them, ‘I will also ask you one thing, which if**

you tell Me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John was from what *source*, from heaven or from men?' And they *began* reasoning among themselves, saying, 'If we say, "From heaven," He will say to us, "Then why did you not believe him?" But if we say, "From men," we fear the people; for they all regard John as a prophet.' And answering Yeshua, they said, 'We do not know.' He also said to them, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, "Son, go work today in the vineyard." And he answered, "I will not"; but afterward he regretted it and went. The man came to the second and said the same thing; and he answered, "I *will*, sir"; but he did not go. **Which of the two did the will of his father?**' They said, 'The first.' Yeshua said to them, 'Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him; but the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him; and you, seeing *this*, did not even feel remorse afterward so as to believe him'" (Matthew 21:23-32).

In the fuller context of Matthew ch. 21, Yeshua's authority was being challenged by the chief priests and elders of the people. As was common in Hebraic dialogue, Yeshua responded to His questioners with a question, about where the authority of the baptism of John originated (Matthew 21:24-25a). This confounded His detractors, who were afraid of what the multitude would think if they answered one way or another. After all, the leaders were concerned about John's popularity among the people (Matthew 21:25b-26). Without perhaps knowing it, but as it was recorded in Luke 1:17, John was sent by God in the "spirit of Elijah" to fulfill the prophecy of Malachi 4:6. So, being put in this predicament by Yeshua's question, the response by the chief priests was simply, "We do not know" (Matthew 21:27a). With such a weak response, Yeshua then gave His parable about the two sons (Matthew 21:28-32), with the blatant insinuation that His accusers were like the first son, who said he would do his father's will, but did not (Matthew 21:29). Instead, the second son, who said he would not follow the father's will—but regretted his statements—then did his father's will (Matthew 21:30-31a). This revealing comparison no doubt had Yeshua's detractors convicted and defensive (Matthew 21:31b-32), setting them up to listen even more intently to the more informative parable that includes the reference to Isaiah 5 and Psalm 118.

Here, Yeshua was declaring His authority to His accusers, by sharing a parable where He not only quoted Psalm 118:22-23, but He began by quoting from Isaiah 5:1-2. This would have naturally introduced His listeners to the parable of the vineyard more fully described in Isaiah 5:

"Listen to another parable. **There was a landowner who PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT AND DUG A WINE PRESS IN IT, AND BUILT A TOWER** [Isaiah 5:1-2], **and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey.** When the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his produce. The vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third. Again he sent another group of slaves larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them. But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, "They will respect my son." But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance." They took him, and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?' They said to Him, 'He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers who will pay him the proceeds at the *proper* seasons.' Yeshua said to them, 'Did you never read in the Scriptures, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE

CHIEF CORNER *stone*; THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES" [Psalm 118:22-23]? "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it. And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.' When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them. When they sought to seize Him, they feared the people, because they considered Him to be a prophet" (Matthew 21:33-46).

It is critical to note that the religious leaders questioning Yeshua were very learned figures, who undoubtedly knew the Scriptural instructions that had been a basis for their positions of leadership. After the first parable comparing the two sons, Yeshua continued with a second parable about the landowner, where He started by quoting from Isaiah 5:1-2. This reference would have immediately put Isaiah's parable of the vineyard in the minds of His listeners. Upon reading Isaiah 5, one discovers that it is Isaiah's indictment of Jerusalem and Judah for not properly tending to the Lord's "vineyard." As a result of disregarding the His instructions, a series of woes and ultimate judgments will come upon the people. The following passage is just a small sampling of what is to occur:

"Woe to those who add house to house *and* join field to field, until there is no more room, so that you have to live alone in the midst of the land! In my ears the LORD of hosts *has sworn*, 'Surely, many houses shall become desolate, *even* great and fine ones, without occupants. For ten acres of vineyard will yield only one bath *of wine*, and a homer of seed will yield *but* an ephah of grain.' Woe to those who rise early in the morning that they may pursue strong drink, who stay up late in the evening that wine may inflame them! Their banquets are *accompanied* by lyre and harp, by tambourine and flute, and by wine; but they do not pay attention to the deeds of the LORD, nor do they consider the work of His hands. Therefore My people go into exile for their lack of knowledge; and their honorable men are famished, and their multitude is parched with thirst. Therefore Sheol has enlarged its throat and opened its mouth without measure; and Jerusalem's splendor, her multitude, her din *of revelry* and the jubilant within her, descend *into it*. So the *common* man will be humbled and the man of *importance* abased, the eyes of the proud also will be abased. But the LORD of hosts will be exalted in judgment, and the holy God will show Himself holy in righteousness. Then the lambs will graze as in their pasture, and strangers will eat in the waste places of the wealthy. Woe to those who drag iniquity with the cords of falsehood, and sin as if with cart ropes; who say, 'Let Him make speed, let Him hasten His work, that we may see *it*; and let the purpose of the Holy One of Israel draw near and come to pass, that we may know *it*!' Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight! Woe to those who are heroes in drinking wine and valiant men in mixing strong drink, who justify the wicked for a bribe, and take away the rights of the ones who are in the right! Therefore, as a tongue of fire consumes stubble and dry grass collapses into the flame, so their root will become like rot and their blossom blow away as dust; For they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel" (Isaiah 5:8-24).

When one reads all of Isaiah 5, and realizes what would have perhaps been in the minds of Yeshua's questioners, the balance of His parable recorded in Matthew 21 has

much more meaning.

It is at this juncture in the conversation that Yeshua mentioned the vineyard owner's servants who are sent to receive the produce (Matthew 21:33-34). They are beaten, killed, and even stoned by the vinegrowers or tenant farmers given responsibility for tending the vines (Matthew 21:35-36). Finally, when the landowner sent his son, the vinegrowers actually conspired to kill him and seize his inheritance (Matthew 21:37-38). At this point in the parable, Yeshua offered up yet another question to His accusers, in which they responded correctly, not knowing that Yeshua was going to make a direct reference to them being just like the wicked vinegrowers (Matthew 21:39-41). Next, Yeshua made a connection of the son to the chief cornerstone by quoting from Psalm 118:22-23 (Matthew 21:42). This indicates that the chief priests and elders' rejection of the chief cornerstone will result in their stewardship for the Kingdom of God being taken away from them and given to others, who will produce the fruit of the Kingdom (Matthew 21:43, 45). Yeshua stated this rejection of the cornerstone was from the Lord and is marvelous in the eyes of those who understand what has happened. Additionally, while subtly indicating that He was the Rock, Yeshua categorically stated that falling upon the stone (meaning the Rock of salvation) and being broken to the point of salvation (Matthew 21:44), is much better than being crushed by the stone and scattered like dust, alluding to Isaiah 8:14-15, a second witness:

**"Then He shall become a sanctuary; but to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, and a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Many will stumble over them, then they will fall and be broken; they will even be snared and caught"** (Isaiah 8:14-15).

In simply studying about the Cornerstone, one is likely to receive a prophetic understanding of this crucial aspect of salvation history. As is described in Romans chs. 9-11, many of the Jewish people, for a period of time, have generally rejected the Cornerstone Yeshua, because of the partial hardening Paul refers to in Romans 9:25. **But this temporary rejection of Yeshua, with responsibilities given to "another nation" to spread the good news, should never be used as some have to promote what is commonly referred to as replacement theology.** Without going into all of the arguments, suffice it to say, the following passage from Romans ch. 11 clearly explains the premise about the wild olive branches being grafted into the olive tree of Israel, to provoke the natural Jewish branches to jealousy—before a massive salvation of the Jewish people will be seen—and finally all Israel being saved and the consummation of the Messianic Kingdom occurring:

**"I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.** Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be! But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them. **For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?** If the first piece of dough is holy, the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are too. **But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree,** do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, 'Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.' Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you,

either. Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. **And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?** For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, 'THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.' 'THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM [Isaiah 59:20-21], WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS [Isaiah 27:9; Jeremiah 31:33-34]. From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all. Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR [Isaiah 40:13 (LXX); Job 15:8; Jeremiah 23:18]? OR WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN [Job 41:3]? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen" (Romans 11:11-36).

A fuller understanding of the whole counsel of God is necessary for people within the Christian faith systems which have been developed upon the writings of the Torah, the Prophets, and the Apostles (Ephesians 2:20). From an entirely structural standpoint, if the foundational cornerstone of a physical *or* spiritual structure is not solid, over time the structure is bound to collapse, or at least experience some significant problems.

While Judaism has a serious structural defect resulting from the temporary rejection of the Cornerstone Yeshua, Christianity also widely suffers from some basic foundational oversights, by misapplying the progressive revelation that has been recorded over time. By substantially under-emphasizing the foundational principles of the faith found in a systematic study of the Torah or Law of Moses, various Christian doctrinal beliefs are based almost exclusively from the Apostolic Scriptures or New Testament. From a construction standpoint, this would be like ignoring the foundation, and starting a house by building on the second (the Prophets and Writings) or third (the Gospels and Epistles) floors, and hoping it will maintain its structural integrity through the ravages of time and the schemes of the Devil (2 Corinthians 2:11). Although Christianity has for the most part rightly recognized Yeshua as the Cornerstone, the unwise leap to the upper floors, to begin building ecclesiastical and religious structures, has created a long term stability problem. Now as the world approaches the End of the Age, both Judaism and Christianity are under severe attacks.

The ability to withstand the onslaught of assaults is waning, because structural cracks are being exploited by the unseen forces which have been at war with God and His people from the beginning (Ephesians 6:12). Providentially, the relatively recent emergence of the Messianic community of faith over the past several decades, as the prophesied restoration of all things (Acts 3:19-21) approaches, is one of the solutions to the structural problems mentioned above. One indication that the End of the Age is on the horizon, is be-

cause during this future time, the saints, who will be at war with the beast system (Revelation 13:1-7), will have a testimony of Yeshua and obey His commandments (Revelation 12:17; 14:12). They will understand that Yeshua is *the* Cornerstone, and they will have an understanding and appreciation for the foundational building blocks of the faith, by studying and observing the instructions of the Torah of Moses. They will also base their faith on the words of Yeshua found in His Sermon on the Mount, by following His direction to build their spiritual houses on Him, the Rock of Salvation, in order to act upon His words:

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.’ When Yeshua had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as *one* having authority, and not as their scribes” (Matthew 7:24-29).

In a like manner, the Lord’s spiritual house (1 Peter 1:4-5), has to be centered on the Cornerstone Yeshua—and we each need to be entirely committed to following His teachings. However, due to the spiritual forces noted above, properly applying what Yeshua has declared, is always subject to different opinions and interpretations by influential voices. Consider, for example, a statement made by Yeshua, just prior to His declarations about acting upon His words. Yeshua’s assertion that He did not come to abolish the Torah or Moses’ Teaching, has been approached multiple ways throughout Christian history:

“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 5:17-19).

Even though Yeshua categorically denied that He came to abolish the Law or the Prophets, and that He claimed to fulfill them—what does this mean? Some think that it is only to accomplish their prophecies, and thus fulfillment means ultimate nullification of the Torah’s validity. Others think that Yeshua’s fulfillment of the Torah means that His teachings and example will fill them full of meaning. And still, Yeshua’s fulfillment of the Torah and Prophets may also include His fulfilling of all righteousness (Matthew 3:15), or His fulfilling of various prophetic words like those of the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27), in which the Torah will be supernaturally transcribed onto the hearts and minds of God’s people. **To claim that Moses’ Teaching has no relevance to Messiah followers, would have no basis in His words in Matthew 5:17-19.**

In a later statement made by Yeshua, recorded in John’s Gospel, He categorically declared to His detractors that the Torah Moses wrote, actually spoke of Him:

“I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him. How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the *one and* only God? Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words” (John 5:43-47).

Note in Yeshua’s conclusion how He questions His listeners with a curious statement: “For if you were believing Moses, you would believe Me—because he wrote about

Me" (TLV). This is a definitive statement that the words of Moses, or the Torah, are absolutely foundational to understanding not only the words of the Prophets, but also the words of the Apostolic Scriptures.

So with all of these Scripture passages referring to *the* Cornerstone Yeshua, the Word made flesh (John 1:14), **and** the foundational importance of acting upon His words—there are some significant words from the Apostle Paul which eloquently summarize what the Lord is doing, despite the structural problems cited earlier. After all, early in the post-resurrection era, the ancient enmity between the Jewish people and those of the nations, had allowed a literal dividing wall to keep people separated, which was erected in the Temple complex. However, with the blood sacrifice of the Messiah, paying the penalty of sin for all humanity and restoring peace in Him, the barrier was to be broken down in the hearts of the redeemed—so that all could come together as one new humanity in Him:

"But now in Messiah Yeshua you who were once far off, have been brought near in the blood of Messiah. For He is **our peace, who made both *groups* one, and broke down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, the *religious* Law of commandments in dogmas, that He might create in Himself the two into one new humanity, so making peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, having killed the enmity by it. And HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR OFF, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR [Isaiah 57:19; 52; Zechariah 9:10]; for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Messiah Yeshua Himself being the corner *stone*, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:13-22, author's rendering from *Ephesians for the Practical Messianic*).**

This description by Paul helps summarize the critical need to not only understand that Yeshua is the Cornerstone of the faith for both the Jewish people and those of the nations—but that the vital foundation of our faith has been built upon the recorded words of the Apostles and the Prophets. However, many Christians today do not even recognize that Moses is considered to be one of the most profound of the prophets given direct revelation from the Lord:

"Since that time no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face" (Deuteronomy 34:10).

And, it must also be understood that Moses' words are highly critical, from a spiritual structural foundation standpoint, because Moses' words spoke of Yeshua (John 5:43-47).

While this understanding of the cornerstone and foundation might seem basic to some, lamentably there continues to be a significant group in the Messianic community of faith which is disregarding the spiritual fact of the barrier wall having fallen, and instead are fortifying divisions between Jewish and non-Jewish Believers. They are impeding, instead of encouraging, the emergence of the one new humanity that Paul describes. Equality as one in the Messiah is not being embraced, because some want two sets of standards, rather than one basic standard for all. While these actions are deterring the unity that should be accelerating—this must be a part of the Father's ultimate plan, or it would not be happening. As has been the case since the resurrection, a partial blindness is only temporary—and eventually the last generation of saints will be structurally sound, united as one, on the Rock Yeshua! In His time, the restoration of God's people will come together as a testimony to the world, prior to the return of Yeshua. It is to this end that we must all labor, until the restoration of all things...

# TNN ONLINE EDITOR'S UPDATE

June 2013

Dear Friends:

I write this month's update now having spent a total of six months relocated back to North Texas. Not only is my presence here no longer a "dream"—but I am actually handling the heat pretty well, as it is a *dry heat* after all!



As I enter into the month of June, I have just printed out (09 June) the rough draft of the forthcoming paperback and eBook commentary *James for the Practical Messianic*. Seeing that this volume was appropriately updated and expanded, it was the last project "hanging over my head" from while I was still in Central Florida. About eighteen months or so after TNN Press announced the release of eBooks for Amazon Kindle on November 2011, only six titles now remain in June 2013 for final editing and formatting! This is a significant feat, and I can definitely say that a huge amount of pressure is off of me. So, expect to see the number of available eBooks and paperbacks from TNN Press to rise this Summer to around forty.

This hardly means that the work of Messianic apologetics is over! As we look toward the month of July, work on **the Big Four**, as I have termed them, now begins! I have already shifted around some books on my unofficial "open projects" shelf in my office, to reflect the new titles on which concentrated work will start. The Big Four, with one title likely to be completed by the close of the Summer, include the books: the *Messianic Torah Helper*, *Torah In the Balance, Volume II*, the *Messianic Sabbath Helper*, and the *Messianic Kosher Helper*. These have been listed in the probable order of release, which has been determined solely by how much work is to be completed for each title. I cannot stress enough that there is no person more anticipatory than *me*, to see these *all* released. **And** by the end of August, the Wednesday Night Bible Study will be shifting toward a lengthy, and likely year-long examination, of the Epistle to the Romans—which I am sure many of you will be looking forward to! Much of July and August will be spent by me preparing for the first few weeks of this study.

Some significant progress was made this past May for the **Theological Defense Trust—Amazon.com Book Reviews** front. The TNN Press title *The New Testament Validates Torah* has been listed at #3 in the Messianic Judaism Top Rated section for Amazon Kindle for a number of weeks. This certainly gives us a highly valuable presence, as people will click on this book and see our other titles. We are greatly appreciative of all who have joined us with this, and encourage you to keep those book reviews coming!

Until next month...

J.K. McKee