

# Overly-Realized Eschatology

**How do you respond to the view of some, that Millennial Kingdom worldwide Torah practices, such as the remembrance of the seventh-day Sabbath or Feast of Tabernacles—should not be breaking into the present time? Are non-Jewish Believers who are anticipating these things by keeping them, holding to an “overly-realized eschatology”?**

The following material has been adapted and expanded from the February 2023 edition of Outreach Israel News, “Are All Believers Called Into a Messianic Lifestyle?”

***How much has the future been breaking into the present?*** Over the past ten years (2014-2023), I have more consciously come to the conclusion that the Messianic movement **is the end-time move of God**—because unlike any other spiritual movement, it places the salvation historical trajectory of Romans 11:26, “all Israel will be saved,” at the forefront of what it does. *This is something which is ultimately going to culminate in the return of Israel’s Messiah.* While controversial for some, it should not be difficult to recognize that as we get closer and closer to the return of the Messiah, that future prophecies have already begun to break into the present. A mainstay of Second Temple Judaism was the idea that God had created two ages, the present evil age and the age to come (4 Ezra 7:50). Yet, a mainstay of Apostolic theology was that the age to come had already broken into the present evil age, by virtue of the resurrection of the Messiah (Galatians 1:4; cf. Romans 1:4). So, what are some of the possible prophecies, specifically concerning the nations and various aspects of God’s Torah, which might really be breaking into the present and more consciously being realized—as we get closer and closer to Yeshua’s return?

“Now it will come about that in the last days the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths.’ For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war” (Isaiah 2:2-4, NASU; also Micah 4:1-3).

“And it will come to pass, that from one New Moon to another, and from one *Shabbat* to another, all flesh will come to bow down before Me,’ says *ADONAI*” (Isaiah 66:23, TLV).

“Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I

will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances” (Ezekiel 26:25-27, NASU; referenced in Titus 2:14; also Jeremiah 31:31-34).

“Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths. And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them” (Zechariah 14:16-17, NASU).

Today, within a great deal (if not the majority), of the Messianic community—you do indeed have many non-Jewish Believers who have been superintended by the Lord into this movement, believing themselves to be fulfilling many of these prophecies. Many non-Jewish Believers, such as myself and my own family, were led by the Lord into this movement, to pay attention to important things such as a Torah foundation, *Shabbat*, and the festivals. We regard ourselves as a part of the Commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:11-13) along with our Messianic Jewish brothers and sisters. Our adoption of a Messianic lifestyle was a part of our spiritual growth in faith, especially given the New Covenant promises of God to write His commandments onto the heart and mind (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27). Our testimony, as non-Jewish Believers being led into the Messianic movement, is not unique only to us, but can be witnessed from the example of many others as well.

Many Messianic Jewish Believers recognize how some future Kingdom realities have been breaking into the present, before the return of the Messiah. A few others, however, are negatively disposed—and are seen to specifically claim that by remembering *Shabbat* in fulfillment of Isaiah 66:23 or *Sukkot* in fulfillment of Zechariah 14:16-17, various non-Jewish Believers are holding to an “overly-realized eschatology.”<sup>1</sup> Future realities should, apparently, be entirely reserved for the future. This claim is often made on the basis of how in the resurrection, people will be living like the angels of Heaven, in a different state of being (Matthew 22:30), without the institution of marriage—but no one has stopped marrying at the present time. It is a fair point to say that various realities, which can only be enacted by the work of God Himself (1 Thessalonians 4:14), such as the future resurrection state—and with it the reanimation of deceased human remains—have to wait until the future. Yet there are things, which can be easily performed today, because they are initiated by human activity.

Furthermore, it cannot be overlooked how the essential reality of the New Covenant, of a new heart and mind, has definitely been present among the redeemed since the work of Yeshua on the tree. We still, however, wait for the full completion of the oracles of Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36 regarding the great return of all Israel to the Promised Land and the Messiah taking up His throne from Jerusalem. The New Covenant is already an active force to be reckoned with now, although more is to come in the future. We understand it as being active, widely because of the theological principle of realized eschatology. The principle of realized eschatology, future prophecy beginning to manifest now in the present experience of God’s own, can hardly be compartmentalized.

Even though a few Messianic Jewish teachers would be seen to criticize non-Jewish Believers—who have started to do various things of Torah, with future realities in mind—criticizing anyone holding to an “overly-realized eschatology” can be applied to one of the most important aspects of today’s Messianic Jewish experience. This is something which originated directly from the ministry of the Apostle Paul in the First Century. Paul went out collecting specific

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<sup>1</sup> Consult some of the opinions detectable in David Rudolph. (2021). *One New Man, Hebrew Roots, Replacement Theology*. Available online via <<http://tku.edu>>; Erik Mattson, “Should Christians Celebrate Sukkot? A Messianic Jewish Response to Hebrew Roots.” (15 September, 2021). Available online via <[youtube.com/@TwoMessianicJews](https://www.youtube.com/@TwoMessianicJews)>.

offerings for the Jewish Believers in Jerusalem (Romans 15:25-26; 2 Corinthians 8:13-14), which itself was rooted in expectations seen in the Tanach, Apocrypha, and Dead Sea Scrolls, regarding the wealth of the nations streaming to Zion in the end-times. This would not only be an offering of gratitude to Israel, but also one of restitution for wrongs and atrocities committed:

“Thus says the LORD, ‘The products of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush and the Sabeans, men of stature, will come over to you and will be yours; they will walk behind you, they will come over in chains and will bow down to you; they will make supplication to you: “Surely, God is with you, and there is none else, no other God”” (Isaiah 45:14, NASU).

“Then you will see and be radiant, and your heart will thrill and rejoice; because the abundance of the sea will be turned to you, the wealth of the nations will come to you. A multitude of camels will cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba will come; they will bring gold and frankincense, and will bear good news of the praises of the LORD. All the flocks of Kedar will be gathered together to you, the rams of Nebaioth will minister to you; they will go up with acceptance on My altar, and I shall glorify My glorious house. Who are these who fly like a cloud and like the doves to their lattices? Surely the coastlands will wait for Me; and the ships of Tarshish will come first, to bring your sons from afar, their silver and their gold with them, for the name of the LORD your God, and for the Holy One of Israel because He has glorified you. Foreigners will build up your walls, and their kings will minister to you; for in My wrath I struck you, and in My favor I have had compassion on you. Your gates will be open continually; they will not be closed day or night, so that men may bring to you the wealth of the nations, with their kings led in procession. For the nation and the kingdom which will not serve you will perish, and the nations will be utterly ruined. The glory of Lebanon will come to you, the juniper, the box tree and the cypress together, to beautify the place of My sanctuary; and I shall make the place of My feet glorious. The sons of those who afflicted you will come bowing to you, and all those who despised you will bow themselves at the soles of your feet; and they will call you the city of the LORD, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas you have been forsaken and hated with no one passing through, I will make you an everlasting pride, a joy from generation to generation. You will also suck the milk of nations and suck the breast of kings; then you will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. Instead of bronze I will bring gold, and instead of iron I will bring silver, and instead of wood, bronze, and instead of stones, iron. And I will make peace your administrators and righteousness your overseers” (Isaiah 60:5-17, NASU).

“But you will be called the priests of the LORD; you will be spoken of as ministers of our God. You will eat the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast” (Isaiah 61:6, NASU).

“Arise and thresh, daughter of Zion, for your horn I will make iron and your hoofs I will make bronze, that you may pulverize many peoples, that you may devote to the LORD their unjust gain and their wealth to the Lord of all the earth” (Micah 4:13, NASU).

“Many nations will come from afar to the name of the Lord God, bearing gifts in their hands, gifts for the King of heaven. Generations of generations will give you joyful praise” (Tobit 13:11, RSV).

“O Zion, rejoice greatly, and shine with joyful songs, O Jerusalem. Rejoice, all you cities of Judah, open your gate[s] forever that the wealth of the nations might be brought to you, and their kings shall serve you. All they that oppressed you shall bow down to you, and the rest [of your feet they

shall lick. O daughter]s of my people, shout out with a voice of joy, adorn yourselves with ornaments of glory. Rule over the ki[ngdom of the...]" (1QM 12.13-15).<sup>2</sup>

If there are a few Messianic Jewish teachers seen to criticize non-Jewish Believers for keeping *Shabbat* with Isaiah 66:23 and future prophecy in view, they need to be consistent. The prophecies quoted above concern the wealth of the nations streaming to Zion in the Last Days. To be candid, without the wealth of the nations **today**—the offerings, donations, and significant monies of non-Jewish Believers—**there would be no Messianic Jewish movement**. Behind almost every Messianic Jewish organization and congregation, is probably some major non-Jewish financial donor. And I have definitely heard the Tanach prophecies about the wealth of the nations streaming to Zion in the Last Days, employed as a means to get non-Jewish Believers to give generously to the Messianic movement! I honestly do not think that any Messianic Jewish rabbi or leader is going to tear up or burn a \$5 million dollar check, if a non-Jewish Believer says that he or she was directed by the Lord to fulfill the words of a future prophecy like Isaiah 60:5-17!

If, as some have claimed, that a number of non-Jewish Believers have inappropriately held to an overly-realized eschatology—and that they need to stop doing things reserved entirely for the future—then at worst, perhaps these people have just misused some of their time. If, however, future realities regarding the nations and God's Torah have indeed been breaking in, here and there, at least in part, in the lives of non-Jewish Believers like my family in today's Messianic movement—then have some possibly been critical toward God's plan of salvation history taking shape? If a person like me was led into the Messianic movement because of future prophecy decreed by God being genuinely fulfilled—and someone is caught saying "No" to this—that is a very dangerous position in which to find oneself.

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<sup>2</sup> Michael Wise, Martin Abegg, Jr., and Edward Cook, trans., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1996), 162.