



OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

monthly newsletter of Outreach Israel Ministries
and MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS



DECEMBER 2021
WHAT HAVE THE LAST
TWO YEARS DONE TO US?

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STATEMENT OF BELIEF

*Outreach Israel Ministries
and Messianic Apologetics*

There is One Almighty Creator God of the Universe, who has revealed Himself to us in the manifestations of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) came in fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies of the Scriptures and is fully God. It is mandatory for us to believe in a Divine Redeemer to be saved. Salvation is a free gift of God to all who receive Messiah Yeshua into their lives and confess of their sins. Those who reject Messiah will be consigned to eternal punishment.

The Holy Scriptures, Genesis-Revelation, are the inspired, infallible Word of God as revealed in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts

All Believers in Israel's Messiah are to be regarded as a part of the Commonwealth of Israel. Jewish and non-Jewish Believers are to respect one another in mutual love as brothers and sisters, and are to work together for the salvation of the Jewish people and return of Israel's Messiah.

The Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy) is the foundation of all Scripture, was followed by our Messiah Yeshua, and is to still be studied and heeded by Believers today.

Yeshua the Messiah is coming to gather the Believers after the Tribulation period.

OIM is an *agapē* ministry, freely and benevolently giving the vast majority of its teachings and resources, without charge, to those who desire to be spiritually nourished.

For a fuller Statement of Faith, consult the OIM website

Outreach Israel News is the monthly newsletter of Outreach Israel Ministries, a non-profit organization with an emphasis on reaching, teaching, and encouraging the Messianic community. Subscription to **Outreach Israel News** is without cost and supported only by donation.

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OLM UPDATE

December 2021

J.K. McKee

Have you really sat down, and thought through what has happened in the past two years? If you have not done this, then you are not alone. Much of what has taken place from January 2020 to the present, is not something many people want to think about—and it has certainly not been something

very many of those in positions of spiritual leadership have wanted to teach or preach about, either. As we prepare to close the calendar year 2021, it is not only imperative that we recognize some of the significant changes that have occurred to the world in these past two years—but that we also recognize some of the significant toll that these past two years have taken on each and everyone of us.

From what I was seeing in December 2019, very few were consciously aware of a new decade starting with 2020. To be sure, as soon as January began, a wide number of charismatic people started to declare that the Lord was going to give His people 20-20 vision in the year 2020. But while they were anticipating some kind of renewed or fresh “anointing” of the Holy Spirit, what instead began to happen was a series of frightening events, which as of this writing have yet to be fully resolved. Rather than enter into some new period of revival, we instead entered into a period of fear, tension, and mistrust. Rather than have some sort of 20-20 vision on a new period of unparalleled expansion of the good news—we have instead seen spiritual fault lines and divisions be exposed, and the beginnings of a probable contraction and radical reduction of Biblical faith in the world. With each new day, new things continue to be exposed to those who are on constant guard.

I think it is safe to say that a great deal of the drama that each of us has witnessed, involves things that completely took us by surprise. I distinctly remember, as 2019 was closing, trying to discern what I was going to say as I needed to tape a New Year’s message (“2020 is Upon Us: What Are We Going to Do?”). I put together a brief outline on an index card, started recording the video, and I distinctly remember being directed to say how unexpected things were likely to show themselves. We had all just seen *Star Wars The Rise of Skywalker*, which included the return of the *dead* Emperor. So, I thought, some unexpected things were likely to reveal themselves in 2020. *I was correct!* And looking back on things, I think like most everyone else, we do wish things would have turned out much differently.

The Scriptures clearly state, “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways” (Isaiah 55:8, NASU). God’s Divine plans are not our limited mor-

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tal plans, and everything that happened throughout 2020-2021—both known and unknown—was according to God’s supernatural design. Sadly, we do not often bother to ask the Lord what He is actually doing in the world, and how we fit into it. Instead, our human proclivity is for us to make plans, and then see how the Lord might fit into what we are doing.

What did we encounter in 2020?

Did 2020 begin for you as an optimistic year? Were you one of those who expected 2020 to provide you with some sort of spiritual 20-20 vision, a renewed clarity for the future, and with distinct revelations from the Holy One? **I think it is fair to say that the year 2020 indeed gave many a spiritual 20-20 vision, information about the future, and even a few revelations from the Holy One.** But for many, these intuitions and revelations have not exactly been uplifting or encouraging; instead these matters have been quite sobering and even frightening. Yet, they have done what they were intended to do: see many men and women of God put on a spiritual wartime footing.

Early in February 2020, reports started creeping out to the mainstream media of some viral outbreak in China, which could spread to other parts of the world. Most of us did not think anything of it. In mid-February 2020, our ministry exhibited at a Messianic conference in Southern California. At the hotel, we did see many Asians who were all wearing masks. Perhaps it was this “virus,” perhaps it was not. On the drive back to Texas, I started getting a fever and was not eating. Perhaps I was just exhausted from the three-day conference and needed some rest. For the next two weeks, I was not feeling that well, with a light cold, but I could still work. It was not until mid-March 2020 that we received word of some “Coronavirus” thing, and that the U.S. government was going to impose quarantines for a few weeks. Like everyone, we got the necessary food and supplies for a few weeks. We then learned about this thing called “social distancing,” we had to all get masks, and we only went out to run errands or shop when we absolutely needed to.

How did many people respond, to the first weeks of the Coronavirus pandemic? Many believed that this was something which would blow over in a few weeks, a few months at most, and that we would all be washing our hands and sanitizing things much more diligently. Many of those with pre-conditions, or the elderly, were very concerned about this Coronavirus. Already susceptible or waging an infirmity, there were legitimate worries about the Coronavirus pushing people over the edge, either into the hospital or into death. Nobody would have thought that today, at the end of 2021, COVID-19 would be something we would still be dealing with. Questions still abound, and rightly so, about the origins of this virus, and certainly what different actors and entities have done regarding how people in general have responded to it. But I think most of us would have expected this to have all gone away by now.

In May 2020, a terrible tragedy took place with the death of George Floyd. Any born again Believer should be shocked and horrified when any death of a human being takes place. The Summer of 2020 saw the rise of Black Lives Matter movement. A wide number of the grievances that the BLM movement has had are legitimate, as

they are in response to racial injustices, hate crimes, and discrimination committed against African Americans. Many people lived in communities that had some sort of BLM rally or protest. But unlike how many born again Believers would turn to having faith in Yeshua (Jesus) and His love being the answer, a significant number in the BLM movement turned to violence, riots, and looting. A wide number of people in the Christian, and even Messianic community, were caught up in the Black Lives Matter movement—but then were quickly made aware of how the BLM organization opposes the traditional family, supports communism, and is fiercely anti-Zionist. While most of what BLM was doing, was concentrated in America, the world was certainly watching. Much of this has now contributed to the growing controversy of Critical Race Theory.

Throughout the lockdowns, social distancing, and even isolation of Summer 2020, one big thing was impending: Election 2020. For many conservative Believers in America, the election of Donald Trump in 2016 against Hillary Clinton, meant that our religious freedoms would remain intact a little longer. Donald Trump was hailed as a Cyrus, someone from a relatively worldly background, but who could be used by God just as He used the Persian king to help the Jewish people return to Israel from Babylon. Many American Believers could not even think or comprehend that Donald Trump could be defeated, especially by Joe Biden. The thought of many on the Right—especially in view of all the massive rallies and popular support—was that unless the Left was to cheat very badly, that Trump had Election 2020.

In the weeks leading up to Election 2020, there were certainly many people in the charismatic and prophetic movements, declaring various things about Donald Trump. These prophetic declarations included a massive victory, a triumph of good over evil, and entering into a new period of peace and prosperity. A number of these prophetic declarations included words about coming warfare against either Russia, China, and/or Iran. For a great number of people, when Election Day 2020 came, and television results started coming in, their faith in various “prophecies” or “words” was quickly evaporated. For sure, the drama had just started, as legal teams were assembled to contest results in various states, and to insist upon an investigation of voter fraud—especially with mail-in ballots. Many American Believers were of the position that the very future of the Republic was at stake, and then others returned to their lives, of the opinion that God had chosen a new king for America, and that the previous king needed to be humbled. The consequences of Election 2020 are a continuing drama in America, that divide not only people in the country, but also many families and faith communities. Even our own Messianic movement has not been immune to the stark divisions caused by Election 2020.

What did we encounter in 2021?

Many conservative Americans entered into 2021 in either a state of anger, or one of disappointment. The new Biden Administration began with the task of trying to finally eradicate the COVID-19 pandemic, and seeing that a pharmaceutical resolution would be implemented for the population. It also began to initiate various stimulus and renewal programs, designed to create a more sustainable, green economy.

Many conservatives, upset by the apparent outcome of Election 2020, simply committed themselves to Election 2022. Others have supported audits and recounts in various states. And then many Believers have fallen into great despair over the future of our country and world, concluding that evil has finally won and that the end-times and apocalypse are imminently forthcoming.

The major issue which has dominated 2021 has been the medical resolution of COVID-19, and with it has come a great deal of fear and division. Those in the mainstream, are those who believe that a medical drug, developed in a very short time, will provide the decisive resolution to the pandemic. Others, especially those who have had the virus and have recovered, are the most skeptical that taking “the jab” is even necessary, much less being subjected to seemingly endless boosters. Whether or not someone has received the mainstream pharmaceutical resolution to COVID-19 or not, has been a major division between family and friends, and who can socialize with whom. Now, people are being laid off from work without pay, they are being threatened with fines or being fired, and whole countries in Europe are going on nationwide lockdowns. To be sure, what is the most concerning, is that people who want to offer alternative opinions or treatments for COVID-19, are finding their voices censored on seemingly free and open social media platforms.

For a great number of religious people in America, 2021 was the year for the solution to COVID-19 to be implemented, and then for them to return to their normal lives and plans. Indeed, this has been the position of most leaders and teachers within the broad Messianic movement! For a great number of other people, this situation has caused them to pay much closer attention to potential, nefarious purposes involved with the whole pandemic. While many would stop short of saying that Revelation’s mark of the beast is being imposed upon people—the same would be quite keen to stress that many have just taken “the jab” without any question or critical thinking, and for the exact same reasons as many will take the future mark of the beast.

The calendar year 2021 closes with various government and professional mandates in place, for people to receive the mainstream resolution to COVID-19. With this come reports that the virus will continue to transform, and that new variants and more shots will be necessary. Those who seemingly have natural immunity, having recovered, still need to be immunized. This is going to apparently be an issue that is going to dominate society for the years, and possibly even decades to come. That the world is in an extreme state of tension over this matter, is a complete understatement—and the drama is hardly over! The Body of Messiah is also split in a way that many of us have never seen before.

What have the last two years done to us?

Many people who look back on the past two years, were caught completely by surprise, and have been shocked at the events of the 2020s, so far. There are those who think that the things which have taken place and dominated our attention, are simply here for a short season, and then they will blow over, allowing us to return to our previous, normal lives. There are others who realize that something is up, if so-

cial distancing, masks, quarantines, and endless boosters are the future. There are those whose dreams for life, a family, raising children, and experiencing some degree of happiness, have been shattered. And, there are those who, looking back on the past two years, have taken the opportunity to think critically and probe the necessary topics and issues at a deeper level.

Like many of you, our family and extended family have been enduring through various disagreements, arguments, and divisions. Not everyone in my extended family, for certain, has bothered to question world events as they have unfolded. They totally accept the mainstream narrative as the indisputable truth. In fact, the events of the past two years have exposed some family members—who we once believed were strong evangelical Believers—as composing the new post-evangelicalism that promotes Leftist social justice causes as a substitute for the gospel.

Like many of you, a number of friendships—and even ministry partnerships—have become stymied. We disagree on certain matters. We believe that certain actions or inactions may indeed affect our fellowshiping with each other, and that there is something that we cannot quite trust because of a particular position, or a consideration of particular information from an atraditional source.

I believe we are actually going to get through the tumult of the past two years, but that the past two years have also been a significant learning experience for all of us! **But there will still be some ongoing questions.** *Who will we be able to trust and rely upon moving forward? Who demonstrated a severe lack of judgment? Who mocked whom, and will be shown to be wrong? How will some of us be graceful in victory?*

What does the Lord want us to learn?

Over the past two years, especially with much of what has been seen from COVID-19, many people have rightfully cried for Believers to fast and pray. There have been prayers for: protection, provision in crisis, healing, and comfort. **But how many have actually prayed for the Lord to show them what they need to be doing for the future?** I would dare say that if we asked the Lord to show us what is coming, many of us would start to elicit violent physical reactions such as vomiting, or even just pass out. *We would indeed discover that our human dreams and aspirations are secondary to His plan for the Creation!*

As limited mortals, we do not fully know what the future is going to reveal. Not fully being able to forecast or predict the future, **we have to go day to day with the Lord.** We have to be very sensitive to His voice, genuinely and sincerely ask Him for the ability to discern good and evil, **and also** ask Him for the information of what is transpiring in our world. This is not easy. James the Just admonished, “If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that” (James 4:15, NASU). Being able to do this, is probably the biggest lesson that many in the Body of Messiah have missed these past two years.

When we look out at the world, closing the calendar year 2021, it is not difficult to recognize how we are barreling toward some kind of **point event**. Whether this will be for a greater good or a greater evil, is hard to say. But I admonish you to be on guard, and to expect the unexpected!