

OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

REACH

TEACH

ENCOURAGE

DISCIPLE



FEBRUARY 2020

A QUESTION FOR THE AGES

OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

REACH TEACH ENCOURAGE DISCIPLE

Cover image: Pexels

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.

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.

Members of the Board:

Mark Huey
Margaret McKee Huey
Mark and Lynn Davis
Heather Wood
Lionel and Lori Stuber
J.K. McKee

© 2020 Outreach Israel Ministries
OIM is a 501(c)(3) non-profit
educational ministry

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

Mark Huey
director

Margaret McKee Huey
office manager

J.K. McKee
Messianic Apologetics

Jane McKee
Taylor and Maggie Willetts

Outreach Israel Ministries
P.O. Box 516
McKinney, TX 75070

Phone: (407) 933-2002
Web: www.outreachisrael.net
www.messianicapologetics.net

OIM UPDATE

February 2020

For the faithful followers of Messiah Yeshua, it is a sobering reality that the promised abundant life with exceeding joy (Jude 1:24) remains peppered with seen and unseen trials, tribulations, and **tests** which inevitably crop up (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). Nevertheless, living life by faith is essentially navigating from one conscience choice or decision to another. From a person's waking moments to his or her slumbering thoughts, the mind is actively deciding where to focus its attention. While trials and tribulations might require survival instincts and self-defensive actions to avoid pain or extinction, the more subtle "**tests**" of life which invade the mind and thoughts can ultimately determine a person's destiny.

Providentially, the concept of "**tests**" filtered into my waking mind the other morning while in attendance at a conference of Messianic Jews and Gentiles gathered to praise the Lord, with *all* determined to advance His Kingdom on Earth. Now admittedly, my thoughts were influenced during the weekend meetings, because I was also convening with three Believers (a Jew and two non-Jews), who I conference call with weekly, to formulate a manual for advancing the Biblical concept of the "**one new man**" among many in the contemporary Church. Thus, the essence of Paul's exhortation to the Believers in Asia Minor was percolating in my head:

"For He is our shalom, the One who made the two into one and broke down the middle wall of separation. Within His flesh He made powerless the hostility—the law code of mitzvot contained in regulations. He did this in order to create within Himself one new man from the two groups, making shalom, and to reconcile both to God in one body through the cross—by which He put the hostility to death. And He came and proclaimed shalom to you who were far away and shalom to those who were near—for through Him we both have access to the Father by the same Ruach. So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household. You have been built on the foundation made up of the emissaries and prophets, with Messiah Yeshua Himself being the cornerstone. In Him the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple for the Lord. In Him, you also are being built together into God's dwelling place in the Ruach" (Ephesians 2:14-22, TLV).

In addition, I have been influenced by and agreed wholeheartedly with a statement made to me by a wise Jewish, elder-leader friend, who has been used by the Lord for the past fifty years to advance the Messianic Jewish movement to where it stands today. A few years ago, he told me that **"In order for God to accomplish great advances in His Kingdom on Earth, the Lord has typically**

used what would be likened to a 'joint venture' between Jews and Gentiles." Upon hearing this declaration, the profundity of it resonated in my heart and spirit. As a result of his perceptive understanding of Biblical history, I have discovered several times throughout the Scriptures where "joint ventures" of sorts are observable. Here are a few examples that come to mind.

First, we see the Israelites' release from bondage in Egypt, and the miraculous escape from absolute slavery to Pharaoh. But after the Israelites and a mixed multitude (Exodus 12:38) were on their own, and traveling to the Promised Land, it was Moses' father-in-law Jethro, a Rechabite who knew the Almighty One, who "came to the rescue" and advised Moses to alter his management style, thus preventing potential loss of the revered deliverer at the helm of the desert sojourn:

"It came about the next day that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from the morning until the evening. **Now when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, 'What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge and all the people stand about you from morning until evening?'** Moses said to his father-in-law, 'Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a dispute, it comes to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor and make known the statutes of God and His laws.' Moses' father-in-law said to him, **'The thing that you are doing is not good. You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. Now listen to me: I will give you counsel, and God be with you. You be the people's representative before God, and you bring the disputes to God, then teach them the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they are to walk and the work they are to do. Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens.** Let them judge the people at all times; and let it be that every major dispute they will bring to you, but every minor dispute they themselves will judge. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear *the burden* with you. If you do this thing and God *so* commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people also will go to their place in peace.' **So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said"** (Exodus 18:13-24, NASU).

Thankfully, Moses passed the **test** of his leadership responsibility and followed Jethro's advice. Consequently, the march to the Promised Land proceeded, albeit delayed for forty years due to disobedience and lack of faith transmitted to a majority of Israelites by the bad report of the "ten spies" (Numbers 14). Hence, Moses, a chosen son of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob or Israelite, would

heed the instruction of a Gentile Jethro—a **joint venture** of sorts—resulting in relative order, so that God’s promise to give the Land of Canaan to the liberated Israel would eventually happen.

A second major event in the history of Israel, was the overthrowing of the Jebusites and establishment of the nation with its capital in Jerusalem where God would place His name (1 Kings 8:29). King David was the principal individual God chose to accomplish this task, after years of infighting among the Israelites and the persistent harassment of the Philistines. Nevertheless, when it came to subdue the nations that were preventing the city of David from forming on Mount Moriah, David employed the use of the “mighty men” from a variety of Gentile backgrounds. 1&2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles 11 describe the many different mighty men who were from different nations, who were led by King David and helped him secure the city of Jebus, so Jerusalem would be established as the eternal capital of Israel. This obvious “**joint venture**” of Jew and Gentile indicates that David passed the **test** of including people from the nations, to accomplish God’s goal where the Ark of the Covenant would reside, and the Temple would be built.

A third ancient “**joint venture**” is described in 2 Kings 10, where the anointed King Jehu is tasked with eliminating the worshippers of Baal from Israel. In this critical collaboration, King Jehu of Israel includes righteous Jehonadab, (incidentally like Jethro from the Gentile nation of Rechabites), to join him in destroying the plague of Baal worshippers in a dramatic encounter. This passage of Scripture describes the effectiveness of a Jew and a Gentile “**joint venture,**” utilizing their respective physical abilities and spiritual giftings, to accomplish a great cleansing of Israel from the poison of Baal worshippers in their midst:

“Now when he had departed from there, he met **Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming** to meet him; and he greeted him and said to him, ‘Is your heart right, as my heart is with your heart?’ **And Jehonadab answered, ‘It is.’ Jehu said, ‘If it is, give me your hand.’ And he gave him his hand, and he took him up to him into the chariot.** He said, ‘Come with me and see my zeal for the LORD.’ So he made him ride in his chariot. When he came to Samaria, he killed all who remained to Ahab in Samaria, until he had destroyed him, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke to Elijah. Then Jehu gathered all the people and said to them, ‘Ahab served Baal a little; Jehu will serve him much. **Now, summon all the prophets of Baal, all his worshipers and all his priests; let no one be missing, for I have a great sacrifice for Baal; whoever is missing shall not live.’ But Jehu did it in cunning, so that he might destroy the worshipers of Baal.** And Jehu said, ‘Sanctify a solemn assembly for Baal.’ And they proclaimed *it*. Then Jehu sent throughout Israel and all the worshipers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left who did not come. And when they went into the house of Baal, the house of Baal was filled from

one end to the other. He said to the one who was in charge of the wardrobe, 'Bring out garments for all the worshipers of Baal.' So he brought out garments for them. **Jehu went into the house of Baal with Jehonadab the son of Rechab; and he said to the worshipers of Baal, 'Search and see that there is here with you none of the servants of the LORD, but only the worshipers of Baal.'** Then they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings. Now Jehu had stationed for himself eighty men outside, and he had said, 'The one who permits any of the men whom I bring into your hands to escape shall give up his life in exchange.' **Then it came about, as soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the royal officers, 'Go in, kill them; let none come out.'** And they killed them with the edge of the sword; and the guard and the royal officers threw *them* out, and went to the inner room of the house of Baal. They brought out the *sacred* pillars of the house of Baal and burned them. They also broke down the *sacred* pillar of Baal and broke down the house of Baal, and made it a latrine to this day. Thus Jehu eradicated Baal out of Israel" (2 Kings 10:15-28, NASU).

Is it not amazing to discover how just these three **"joint ventures"** achieved great victories for the children of Israel, advancing His Kingdom on Earth? But upon arriving now in the post-resurrection era, the need to employ **"joint ventures"** intensifies. Hence, the Scriptures referenced above from Ephesians 2 about the need for a **"one new man"** collaboration is so meaningful.

After all, since Israel has been called to be a **"light to the nations"** (Isaiah 42:6; 49:6), how is it going to complete the task with a limited number of people and millions, if not billions of people to share the Light? The Apostle Paul understood this dilemma completely, especially after he experienced a general rejection of the good news from his own people, but the willing acceptance of the truth about Yeshua from the Greeks and Romans he was ministering to throughout the Mediterranean basin. Obviously, these non-Jewish people groups needed to be reached with the message of Yeshua. Hence, Paul and the other apostles were delighted when Greeks, or Romans, or "barbarians" received the good news and were compelled to take it to their respective families, clans, tribes, or people groups. Clearly this was God's plan, and the fact that Yeshua and the hope of His calling was resident in the hearts of those born from above, was the fundamental way the Word spread throughout the ancient world to this very day. Ostensibly without the **"joint venture"** of Jews and Gentiles taking the good news to the world, the spread of salvation would have ended centuries ago. But because the middle wall of separation was torn down, believing Jews and Gentiles have been in the process of building the household of God with the indwelling presence of the Spirit, ever since they have become one in the Messiah Yeshua. This represents the ultimate **"joint venture"**!

Nevertheless, in the Twenty-First Century, as the return of the Messiah

approaches, the formation of the Messianic Jewish movement over the past fifty plus years is a virtual sign that God is fulfilling His promises to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In fact, it is understood that the return of Jewish people to belief in the Messiah Yeshua, is a telltale indication that the prophesied end-times are here! The restoration of physical Israel to the Promised Land, coupled with the great number of Messianic Jews forming places of worship and reaching out to their family and friends is more proof. However, along with these tremendous spiritual blessings and happenings, there are definite **tests** which come to those leaders in positions of responsibility. Are they going to recognize the **"joint venture"** patterns of Ancient Israel as noted above, when it became critical to either follow the advice of or work in concert with certain people from the nations at large? For most assuredly, when it comes to a major Kingdom events such as the restoration of Israel, and the return of the Jews to the Messiah—the need for **"joint ventures"** is of paramount importance! Certainly, Isaiah prophesied the coming days when the nations will literally carry the children of Israel back to the Land of Promise:

"Thus says the Lord GOD, 'Behold, I will lift up My hand to the nations and set up My standard to the peoples; and they will bring your sons in their bosom, and your daughters will be carried on their shoulders'" (Isaiah 49:22, NASU).

It must be our prayer that as the end-times proceed, the Holy Spirit will guide those raised up to lead the Messianic Jewish movement to embrace those Gentiles with a Ruth-like call, to work in concert to accomplish God's plan for the ages! This is a **test** which has to be passed, because the God of Creation is ultimately fulfilling His Word to not only His chosen people, but *all* who call upon the name of the Lord from every tongue, tribe and nation. What a joy to watch that happen in His appointed time. . .

And as a final reminder on the subject of testing, just be aware of **"tests"** for *all* who claim allegiance to the Messiah Yeshua. Remember what Paul stated to the Believers in Corinth regarding their profession of faith:

"For indeed He was crucified because of weakness, yet He lives because of the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, yet we will live with Him because of the power of God *directed* toward you. **Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!** Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Yeshua the Messiah is in you—unless indeed you fail the test? **But I trust that you will realize that we ourselves do not fail the test"** (2 Corinthian 13:4-6, NASU).

Everyone, regardless of whether they are a Jew or Gentile has been, is, and will be tested, until the day the Messiah Yeshua returns to claim His own. May we all in our weakness pass the test and be counted among the redeemed!

Until the restoration of all things..

Mark Huey

A QUESTION FOR THE AGES

by J.K. McKee

adapted from the book Torah In the Balance, Volume I

One of the most intriguing issues that I dealt with as an undergraduate at the University of Oklahoma, as a political science major (1999-2003), was the philosophy known as Liberalism. This "Liberalism," with a capital "L," is not the ideology that is converse to conservatism as in "Republicans versus Democrats" here in the United States. Liberalism is, rather, an ideology centered around individual rights and free enterprise that every human being is believed to be entitled to. These ideals are adhered to very strongly in the Western democratic world, and they have enabled me to speak my views in a society where the freedom to express one's own opinion is greatly upheld.

Many Believers, notably those in the United States, greatly respect the freedoms and liberties that we have. According to our system of government, we can worship God in the way we choose and believe whatever we want as long as it does not disrupt the public order. But for many centuries prior to the founding of our country, this was not the case. On the contrary, in the early days of our Messianic faith, following the ascension of Yeshua into Heaven, Believers have continually run into problems with civil authority. The Messianic Scriptures (New Testament) repeatedly tell us that the Apostles ran into problems with both the Jewish religious leaders, who by-and-large rejected the Messianic claims of Yeshua, and with the Roman civil authorities, many of whom believed that they were the cause of an insurrection against the emperor. History later records that many Believers were indeed persecuted and martyred for their faith in Him.

The question for the true Believers since has always been: **How do we function in society, yet keep our faith?** As we review what has happened to those who since the First Century C.E. have claimed a belief in Messiah Yeshua, different groups of people have responded to this question in different ways.

Four centuries after Yeshua's ascension into Heaven, Augustine, bishop of Hippo, wrote his work *City of God*. Whether you agree with his theology or not, his writings have influenced many over the centuries, both Catholic and Protestant alike. He described what he believed to be a split in human life, between one's carnal and spiritual existence, writing down an incredibly long list of sins and perversions that has tainted and marked fallen humanity throughout the ages with which we should all agree.¹ In describing the human condition, Augustine made the analogy between two cities: the City of God and the City of Man. In Earthly life he believed people must contend with what has been dealt to them in the City of Man, its gross imperfections, and live with the civil authorities as long as they do not harass God's people for their faith. But as followers of the Lord, the righteous should strive to enter the City of God and its perfections in the hereafter. He says, "In the one [City of Man], the princes and the nations it subdues are ruled by the love of ruling; in the other [City of God], the princes and the subjects serve one another in love, the latter obey-

ing, while the former take thought for all.”²

Many years later this challenge was brought forth by two of the Reformers who greatly shaped Protestant theology: Martin Luther and John Calvin. Luther, in particular, recognized the distinct separation between civil and religious powers. In Luther’s work “The Christian In Society,” he commented that “Both [systems] must be permitted to remain; the one to produce righteousness, the other to bring about external peace and prevent evil deeds. Neither one is sufficient in the world without the other. No one can become righteous in the sight of God by means of the temporal government, without Christ’s spiritual government.”³ His position was very close to Augustine’s. Do your best in society and be a witness for the faith, but recognize that secular government has its place in God’s eternal plan.

Calvin held to a slightly different position than Luther or Augustine. The author of *Institutes of the Christian Religion* and numerous other books and commentaries, Calvin actually put many of his beliefs and philosophies to practice in the city of Geneva, trying to facilitate a utopia here on Earth. Calvin did, however, believe in a separation between secular government and religion. He stated in his book *God and Political Duty*, that “spiritual reign, even now upon earth, commences within us some preludes of the heavenly kingdom, and in this mortal and transitory life affords us some of the prelibations of immortal and incorruptible blessedness...”⁴ Although some aspects of God’s Eternal Kingdom could be captured on Earth, which is what Calvin tried to do in Geneva, it was ultimately Heaven where the Believer’s hope rested. Many theologians since have held to the belief that while some elements of God’s Kingdom could be brought to Earth, the Kingdom may not be consummated on this Planet with the Messiah’s physical return.

These examples throughout history demonstrate some of the different attitudes of today’s Christians concerning how they are to function in society. All too often Christians have been of the mindset that they are not to look for a *physical, coming* manifestation of God’s Kingdom on Earth via the return of Yeshua. Rather, they try to do the best they can here in the present system capturing varied “elements” of the Kingdom, but live knowing that Heaven is better. Surely, we all desire to meet our Lord and Savior in Heaven at the time of our departing this mortal frame, but an intermediate Heaven between death and resurrection is not our ultimate destination.⁵ The Hebrew Prophets speak of an age when God Himself will indeed be present among us. Zechariah 8:3 decrees, “I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the

¹ These sins are, according to Augustine: “gnawing cares, disquiet, griefs, fears, wild joys, quarrels, law-suits, wars, treasons, angers, hatreds, deceit, flattery, fraud, theft, robbery, perfidy, pride, ambition, envy, murders, parricides, cruelty, ferocity, wickedness, luxury, insolence, impudence, shamelessness, fornications, adulteries, incests, and the numberless uncleanness and unnatural acts of both sexes, which it is shameful so much as to mention; sacrileges, heresies, blasphemies, perjuries, oppression of the innocent, calumnies, plots, falsehoods, false witnessings, unrighteous judgments, violent deeds, plunderings, and innumerable other crimes that do not easily come to mind, but that never absent themselves from the actuality of human existence” (St. Augustine, “City of God,” in Mitchell Cohen and Nicole Fermon, eds., *Princeton Readings in Political Thought* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996], pp 133-134).

² *Ibid.*, 136.

³ Martin Luther, “The Christian in Society,” in *Ibid.*, 197.

⁴ John Calvin, “God and Political Duty,” in *Ibid.*, pp 202-203.

⁵ For a further discussion, consult the author’s article “To Be Absent From the Body.”

LORD of hosts *will be called* the Holy Mountain.” The Lord God, in the Person of Yeshua the Messiah, will physically reign on Planet Earth for a thousand years, and then lead us all into eternity.

One day Yeshua will return and establish His Eternal Kingdom. During the time God has given us on this sphere we must endeavor to do all we can to see that ultimate goal accomplished. We must make sure that we are performing our appropriate role as His Kingdom’s representatives, living the life of the world to come *in the present evil age* (cf. Galatians 1:4).

We Must Change

When we look back at history, certainly the attitude of separating carnal and spiritual powers was understandable for the times in which the early Reformers lived. They were protesting a Roman Catholic system which had essentially merged spiritual and political authority in Europe, with the pope commanding an incredible amount of power. *But what of today?* What of the Believers who our Heavenly Father is drawing to Himself in this time, when all too often the tendency in our world is to draw away from the Bible and His Son, Yeshua? An attitude of just “mucking through life” hoping for better on the other side might have worked in the Middle Ages, and even on up until the early 1900s. But it will not work in the Information Age when secularism and ecumenism erode the core foundations of Biblical faith. How are we going to handle the difference between the competing “temporal” and “spiritual” powers? How are we going to know where our hope of salvation rests?

The world is only getting worse and worse, with high rises in sin and lawlessness. **We need not fall prey to the deception that the enemy has laid.** We must learn to change our lives for the better and return to a foundational grounding in *all* that the Lord has provided for us in His Word. We must have transformed lives, not only in word, but also in deed.

If as Believers in the Risen Savior, Yeshua the Messiah, we want to properly answer the challenges and tribulations that the world is going to give us in the times to come, we need to do something different. We must not make the separation between “temporal” and “spiritual” that many of those in prior history did, just “living” with the powers that be. We as the Body of Messiah must become that separated people He is returning for. We must desire to see a change here on Planet Earth. As the generation which is first seeing the distinct Hebraic and Jewish lifestyle of the Apostles being restored in significant effect, the initial growth of the Messianic movement, and Jewish and non-Jewish Believers coming together in unity in numbers not seen since the First Century—the call God has given us is **much greater than those who have gone before.** We must be ready to properly answer the call and take up the challenge.

But His Kingdom is Not of This World...

All too often it has been quoted of Yeshua saying to Pontius Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm” (John 18:36).

This passage is used by some to justify the idea that we as Believers should *not* be trying to change others and desire to see His Kingdom restored here on Earth, because supposedly it is only in Heaven. Calvin actually said "it is a Jewish folly, therefore, to seek and include the kingdom of Christ under the elements of this world,"⁶ which could possibly be taken as meaning that the coming Kingdom of God on Earth is not ideal,⁷ as a popular hermeneutic of his time was to spiritualize or allegorize prophecies concerning Israel's physical Kingdom for the role of the Church. But when Yeshua said that His Kingdom is not of this world and that His Disciples did not "fight" for Him, the Messiah was speaking that *the nature* of His Kingdom was not of this world. He was not saying that one day His Kingdom would not be consummated *physically* on Earth with Him ruling from Jerusalem. He said, rather, "My kingdom is not of this world....But now my kingdom is from another place" (John 18:36, NIV). God's Kingdom is not to be manifested via human military conquest, but instead begins with the transformation of hearts and minds via the good news; the defeat of Earthly governments comes at the time designated by the Heavenly Father (cf. Mark 13:32; Matthew 24:36).

As Believers in Yeshua, we are still awaiting His return and the full establishment of the Messianic Era. The full reign of His Kingdom—presently—"is" from another place—even though it affects those of us who are redeemed and citizens of Heaven (Philippians 3:20), yet living on Earth. But for how much longer will this be the case? When will we see the consummation of the ages, and Yeshua return to Earth?

A Challenging Time Lies Ahead

Anyone who studies end-time Bible prophecy should realize that the return of Yeshua is nearing. All you have to do is pick up a newspaper and be aware of how world events are being staged that will one day lead toward a one-world government, cashless "mark of the beast" monetary system, a single world leader, and numerous conflicts that could very well annihilate the human race. Even if we think that some of these things may be decades away, we are still getting closer every year. The Scriptures tell us quite plainly that if the Messiah does not return, "no flesh would be saved" (Matthew 24:22, NKJV; cf. Mark 13:20), an indication of how bad things will eventually be.

Such a message can be very depressing for some Believers, and likewise, more questions are created concerning *what* we should do if we believe God's people are to endure the end-times. Will it just be as if we are given "spiritual impartation" and know what to do by the Holy Spirit filling us by "osmosis"? Or in this time of relative tranquility, is the Lord giving us the opportunity to be military officers in training, as it were, so that when the difficult times come, those who are firmly grounded in the truths of His Word may rise up as leaders and proclaim His good news and minister to those in need? Whether or not we are the generation which will see Yeshua return, we have still been given some immense responsibility. We could be the precu-

⁶ Ibid., 202.

⁷ Note how Calvin probably did not intend his statement to be viewed this way, even though this is a sentiment of many later teachers and theologians.

sor generation to the last generation, or be those who are responsible for raising up the precursor generation to the last generation. We cannot know for certain if we will see the end-times and Second Coming—but *we certainly have work to do in order to get there!*

The Western governmental system which many of us benefit from presently grants us many freedoms, because much of it is founded in the Bible. This has unfortunately not been the case for many who have gone before us in the faith, such as during the Middle Ages when the Roman Catholic Church held the only copies of Scripture and the masses did not have them, in addition to the almost absolute power it held in Western Europe for many centuries. Modern trends, however, indicate that the time for God's people to conduct themselves freely in the religious world is waning. The political ideology of Liberalism, while giving Believers in Yeshua the freedom to religiously express themselves as they want, also demands that we respect other religions, and likewise not become "exclusive" in saying that salvation or approval only comes from One Source, Messiah Yeshua. Ecumenism and the belief that all religions worship the same "God" is gaining considerable ground. Those of us who worship and believe in the Holy One of Israel, and are of the sound conviction that Yeshua the Messiah—*legitimately* known to many by His English name Jesus Christ—is the only Redeemer, need to be firm in our faith as His return draws closer.

The problem is, given all the temptations of the world and modern trends, how are we supposed to do this? Unfortunately, much of modern Christianity, or for that matter the Messianic movement, does not have the answer. Many people in Christianity are looking for a pre-tribulation rapture escape to Heaven, or are falsely mistaken so as to think that the Kingdom *is not coming*. The Messianic movement today is still developing and maturing, *both spiritually and theologically*. Much of it still cannot deal with the basic issue of what it is to become in the future. Many do not realize that the overarching goal of our faith is to see God's Kingdom restored on Planet Earth, not so that we would just see the complete transformation of our individual selves, but of His entire Creation.

We all have a serious challenge in front of us, especially because the growth of and maturation of much of the Messianic movement is being deterred by sensationalists and fundamentalists, who have brought a great deal of false teaching into the camp, all of whom have an agenda, a few of whom have denied the Lord Yeshua.⁸ We must be able to confront the deception, knowing Biblical truth and being able to defend the truth, but also knowing **that how we conduct ourselves** will be the key to us being a people separated from the world and holy unto Him. Ungodly attitudes can decelerate a move of God.

Unfortunately this third part, being set-apart from the world, is the most difficult for many to consider, because it is something that has not been the most readily emphasized by modern Christianity. On the contrary, many Christian teachers have told their students and followers to "blend in" with contemporary society and culture, rather than being separated from it and able to subvert it. Yet the Apostolic

⁸ Consult the author's articles "The Quest for Credibility" and "The Top Ten Urban Myths of Today's Messianic Movement."

Scriptures are replete with examples of how people like the Apostle Paul were able to maintain their separated standing as a part of God's community, and subvert the pagan religious ideology of his day. *A delicate balance indeed.*

Although being a separated people unto God might sound like a good idea on paper, putting this concept into practice can be very difficult. We are certainly *not* called to be a separated people by secluding ourselves in some cave or commune, or by putting our fingers in our ears and hiding under our beds when bad things happen. We must walk upright and be a living and active testimony for our Lord and Savior in our communities and the world at large.

Love is the Key

It can be agreed among born again Believers that there is a strong need for those who have been redeemed and bought by the blood of the Messiah, on how we must be different from the rest of the world. Yeshua directed quite plainly, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. . . Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14, 16). Likewise, He said, "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

Prior to Yeshua instructing His followers to "love one another," He made a very intriguing statement. He said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34). All too often, many have glossed over this verse thinking that the Messiah was instituting a "new" commandment, replacing it with one of those "Old Testament commandments," as the "Old Testament Law" is inappropriately perceived as being a series of "strict rules and regulations" that did not have anything to do with love.

On the contrary to what some people might think, this is not the case at all. In Leviticus 19:18, the Lord clearly says, "You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD." "Love" is not simply a "New Testament" concept, as the command to love is clearly issued in the Tanach or Old Testament. Many unfortunately do not realize that Yeshua was directly quoting from Old Testament Scripture when He said "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF" (Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:31).

Not surprisingly, the Greek word for "new" in John 13:35, *kainos* (καίνος), can mean "*new; of new quality; unused; unknown, unheard of*" (CGEDNT).⁹ It could be argued that in the First Century the command to love one another—or love outsiders—was not something readily emphasized by the religious leaders of the time, considering the fact that the Jewish people were suffering from Roman occupation in Judea, and other than a brief period of independence provided by the Maccabees, had not been independent since the Babylonian dispersion.¹⁰ It is interesting that readers can view Yeshua's word as "an **unused** commandment I give to you," meaning that the Torah command to love had gone largely forgotten among many of His time.

⁹ Barclay M. Newman, Jr., *A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft/United Bible Societies, 1971), 90.

¹⁰ For a further discussion, consult the author's article "The Impact of the Maccabees on First Century Judaism," in the *Messianic Winter Holiday Helper* by Messianic Apologetics.

Certainly the depth or dimensions that Yeshua gave to the love required of His Disciples, cannot be overlooked. F.F. Bruce, acknowledging how the command to love (John 13:34-35) is from the Tanach or Old Testament (Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18), simply suggests, "Jesus imparted a new depth of meaning to it."¹¹

We should all agree on the fact that having love for one another, which in turn should create cohesive unity in the Messiah's Body, will certainly set us apart from the world. Divine love, *agapē* (ἀγάπη) as it widely appears in the Apostolic Scriptures (New Testament), must guide us. *Agapē* is so powerful that Yeshua says of it, "Greater love [*agapē*] hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13, KJV).

Yeshua is the embodiment of pure love, and is the example we are to all follow. Yeshua, our Ultimate Friend, laid down His life for us and paid the penalty for our sins with His own blood. *Now can we do that for one another?* As you continue reading this book, keep this imperative concept in mind. We will be discussing many issues interpreted differently among Believers in the faith. Remember that although there may be differences of opinion, our love for one another is ultimately manifested in whether or not we can *die* for each other, as Yeshua died for us. This was certainly something "new" to the Disciples of Yeshua. Speaking for myself: I love my evangelical Christian brothers and sisters with the love of Jesus Christ, and because I love them, *I want the changes I have made in my life to impact them positively!*

How are we to be separated from the world?

Love by itself is an interesting, but often abstract concept. **Our faith is most imperatively, to be living and active.** It is one thing to say that you love God and love your brothers and sisters, but it is another thing to actually go and *do it*. What is the evidence of our love for the Lord and for our brethren? What is some important, external evidence of the inward change we have experienced through Yeshua—that will indeed set God's people apart from everyone else on Planet Earth? The answer is found in Yeshua's teaching in His Sermon on the Mount:

"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

Yeshua told His followers that others would see the light that they have through their good works.¹² This is not to say that Believers are saved by means of their works. The Scriptures state quite plainly, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). However, if each of us has truly been changed by an encounter with God, being spiritually regenerated, we will naturally do good things. The following verse, Ephesians 2:10, further admonishes, "For we are His workmanship, created in Messiah Yeshua for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." By doing good things, hopefully those of the world will be drawn to us and want to know more about the Almighty One we serve. Our Heavenly Father says, "For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy

¹¹ F.F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 294.

¹² Grk. *hopōs idōsin humōn ta kala erga* (ὅπως ἴδωσιν ὑμῶν τὰ καλά ἔργα); "so that they may see your good works" (NRSV).

God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that *are* upon the earth” (Deuteronomy 14:2, KJV).

But what are “good works”? Most Christians will say that doing good works are following the Divine will of God and doing what He told us. *We should all agree with this assessment.* However, we should each take serious notice of what Yeshua specifies after telling His followers to have good works. His teaching continues, saying, “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” (Matthew 5:17-18).

The Messiah came to fulfill the Torah or Law of Moses, meaning that He came to live it out perfectly, so that His followers might ably emulate His example of obeying its commandments. The Greek verb translated as “fulfill” is *plēroō* (πληρώω). Commenting on this, *TDNT* validly remarks, “the idea is not simply that of validating the law as distinct from abolishing it. The goal of Jesus’ mission is fulfillment. He does not simply affirm the law and the prophets but actualizes the will of God that is declared in them from the standpoint of both promise and demand.”¹³

It is the Messiah Himself who said that the Torah will continue to remain in effect until Heaven and Earth pass away and all is accomplished. Contrary to what many Christians believe, all has not been accomplished. We are not living in the Messianic Age, and there are many prophecies in the Tanach (Old Testament) that have yet to be fulfilled. The Torah is still in effect and applicable for God’s people today. While Yeshua has come as our everlasting atonement for sin, and some alterations have occurred in regard to the Levitical priesthood and animal sacrifices (cf. Hebrews 7:12)—there are still eternal principles in the Torah that we are to all follow. The Torah still forms the basis of Biblical ethics and morality, and how God’s people are to be identified as His own. As the Apostle Paul wrote, “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Messiah” (1 Corinthians 11:1). We are called to emulate Yeshua and follow the Father’s will, just as He did—and just as His first followers did.

What is the Father’s will?

Yeshua will actually assign eschatological penalties to those who teach others to not follow the Torah’s commandments, as He said, “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 5:19). Even more severe and not to be overlooked is a very sober warning given in Matthew 7:21-23:

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare

¹³ G. Delling, “*plēroō*,” in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, abridged (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 869.

For a further discussion, consult the author’s exegetical paper on Matthew 5:17-19, “Has the Law Been Fulfilled?”

to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS' [Psalm 6:8]."

The Messiah says that only those who perform the will of the Father are allowed into the Kingdom of Heaven. He speaks of those who *thought* they were in His Divine will, and even performed miracles and cast out demons in His authority, but were not, because they committed lawless acts. The Greek word for "lawlessness" is *anomia* (ἀνομία), which *BDAG* defines as the "**state or condition of being disposed to what is lawless, lawlessness.**"¹⁴

Could we not argue from this that being in the will of God very much includes being in obedience to Him and to His commandments? Consider what the Lord Himself says in Deuteronomy 5:29: "Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always,¹⁵ that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!" God wants His people to observe His statutes and ordinances so that life may be good for them, and that they might be blessed.

When Moses saw God appearing to him, he proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave *the guilty* unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations" (Exodus 34:6-7e). Moses attested that the Lord is One "keeping steadfast love for the thousandth generation" (NRSV). *Chesed* (חֶסֶד) relates to "God's relationship with the people or an individual, **faithfulness, goodness, graciousness**" (*HALOT*).¹⁶ The Lord says that He will show *chesed*, "lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments" (Exodus 20:6). While God's *chesed* is freely bestowed, the people whom He bestows it to should acknowledge and appreciate such lovingkindness by their obedience.

If we desire to have God be merciful and compassionate upon us in our times of need, then we should endeavor to be obedient to Him and to His commandments. Is it possible that we might overemphasize God's mercy, sometimes—at the expense of our responsibility to be obedient to Him? Are not God's grace and our obedience to Him *both* vital to a right relationship with Him? Might it be that those who do not obey God's Instruction do not experience His grace and mercy, in the same way that those who do obey Him do?

Loving God and Keeping His Commandments

There is a strong connection between loving God and keeping His commandments. After all, it was the Messiah Himself who said in His Olivet Discourse concerning the Last Days, "because lawlessness shall have been multiplied, the love of many will grow cold" (Matthew 24:12, LITV). Or, as rendered in the Complete Jewish

¹⁴ Frederick William Danker, ed., et. al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, third edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 85.

¹⁵ Heb. *l'hem l'yir'ah* *oti v'lish'mor et-kol-mitzvotai kol-ha'yamim* (אָחִי וְלִשְׁמֹר אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתַי כָּל־הַיָּמִים (לְיִרְאָה לְיִרְאָה)).

¹⁶ Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, eds., *The Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2001), 1:337.

Bible, “many people’s love will grow cold because of increased distance from *Torah*.”

The Apostle Paul states in Romans 13:10, “Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of *the law*.” The Greek word for “fulfillment,” *plērōma* (πλήρωμα), is understood to be “**that which is brought to fullness or completion**” (*BDAG*).¹⁷ James the Just similarly says, “If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF,’ [Leviticus 19:18] you are doing well” (James 2:8). ***Love is the overwhelming evidence of understanding what God’s Torah is.*** When we keep God’s commandments, we will find ourselves learning to demonstrate *more* of His love, compassion, mercy, and goodness to all we encounter.

God gave us His Instruction out of love—not to be a burden or hassle as many mistakenly believe. The Torah is to keep us safe and within appropriate, acceptable boundaries, not too dissimilar from how Deuteronomy 22:8 originally instructed, “When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof, so that you will not bring bloodguilt on your house if anyone falls from it.” For those who love God, His commandments provide the framework for how we are to best experience the relationship He desires with us.

The Apostle John taught extensively about the connection between Divine love, *agapē*, and God’s commandments. He says in 1 John 5:2-3, “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.” Born again Believers are not to obey the Torah out of some legalistic sense of “duty” or “obligation,” but rather because they love Him and *naturally* want to follow His Instructions—as the Holy Spirit transforms their hearts and minds and compels such obedience. However, John admonished, “The one who says, ‘I have come to know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:4). If we claim to be in the faith yet we fail to keep God’s commandments, and do not really want to obey Him, then are we nothing but liars? This does not mean that we may fail to do things out of ignorance—but what about those who are not at all seeking to obey God? If we fail to seek the Lord’s conviction in our lives, then who are we deceiving: God or ourselves?

The Messiah says in John 14:15, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” Yeshua, who is the LORD God made manifest in the flesh, is the Giver of the Torah and the Torah composes *His commandments* (cf. Isaiah 33:22; James 4:12). Moses told the Ancient Israelites in Deuteronomy 28:9 that “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.” The Hebrew word for “holy,” *qodesh* (קֹדֶשׁ), is defined by *BDB* as “*apartness, sacredness, holiness*.”¹⁸ Its equivalent in the Greek Apostolic Scriptures is *hagios* (ἅγιος), from which our English terms “holy” and “hallowed” are derived. If we as Believers want to be a set-apart and holy people, then we must commit ourselves to obey God’s commandments.

In understanding the times and seasons in which we live, **the need to be a sep-**

¹⁷ *BDAG*, 829.

¹⁸ Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 871.

arated people unto the Lord is only going to increase. Secularism and the idea of universal tolerance of religion are sweeping through at an alarming rate, and we as His people must take steps to preserve who we are, Biblically. The overwhelming issue we face becomes: **How will we accomplish this?**

Concerning the Last Days and our need to be a holy and separated people, the Apostle Peter might ask us a strong rhetorical question, in stating, "Since everything is going to be destroyed like this [in the Day of the LORD], what kind of people should you be? You should lead holy and godly lives, as you wait for the Day of God and work to hasten its coming" (2 Peter 3:11-12a, CJB).

Let those of us who truly desire to be a holy people unto Him, sanctified and separated from the rest of the world, seek Biblical truth above all else. Let us not be those whom Yeshua called "lawless," and then are dismissed from His presence. Let us truly seek to be in God's will and strive to keep His commandments. Let us truly live holy and godly lives as we wait for the Messiah's return **and seek to make a difference in our world**, as people at large witness our good works!



**COMING
MARCH 2020**