Messianic Beginnings: An Introductory Study has been written as a primer, following the journey of the Huey and McKee family, as evangelical Believers drawn into the Messianic movement in 1995, and learning what it meant to have a more comprehensive understanding of the ancient roots of our Biblical faith. This workbook has been mainly produced to help non-Jewish Believers have a good overview of what the Messianic movement is all about, based on our family's experience. Since the turn of the Millennium, the Holy Spirit has prompted many more non-Jewish Believers to tangibly embrace their Hebraic Roots in the Tanach (Old Testament) Scriptures, and Jewish Roots in the faith practices of Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) and His Disciples, specially calling them into the Messianic movement. They have joined in both unity and common cause with their fellow Jewish Believers in Israel's Messiah, as we all steadily approach Yeshua's return!

Have you heard about the Messianic movement? Have you heard about the significance of the Torah for a Believer's walk of faith? Do you know why you might be involved with these things? Do you need a foundational introduction to the Hebraic and Jewish Roots of our faith, and who Yeshua truly is in His Biblical and historical context? Do you want to know more about what God is doing in this hour? If you have ever asked any of these questions, then this workbook can help get you started.

This volume examines a number of areas for study and discussion, and will prompt questions for personal reflection or group exchanges in twelve easy lessons. Each chapter has study questions which will enable you to think and examine the Scriptures, and key issues as they involve components of the Messianic lifestyle and theology, often different from contemporary evangelical Protestantism. If you are unfamiliar with the Messianic movement, some of its basic beliefs and lifestyle practices, and the great potential it offers God's people today—then *Messianic Beginnings* is the book for you! This is a resource that can definitely get many you started on a journey into the Messianic walk.

MESSIANIC BEGINNINGS

AN INTRODUCTORY STUDY

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Abbreviations and Terms

The following is a list of abbreviations for reference works and special terms which are used in publications by Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics. Please familiarize yourself with them as the text may reference a Bible version, i.e., RSV for the Revised Standard Version, or a source such as *TWOT* for the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, solely by its abbreviation. Detailed listings of these sources are provided in the Bibliography.

ABD: *Anchor Bible Dictionary*
AMG: *Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament*
ANE: Ancient Near East(ern)
Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament
Ara: Aramaic
ASV: American Standard Version (1901)
ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)
b. Babylonian Talmud (*Talmud Bavli*)
B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.
BDAG: *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)
BDB: *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*
C.E.: Common Era or A.D.
CGEDNT: *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Barclay M. Newman)
CGL: *Cambridge Greek Lexicon* (2021)
CHALOT: *Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Holladay)
CJB: Complete Jewish Bible (1998)
CJSB: Complete Jewish Study Bible (2016)
DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition
DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls
EDB: *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*
EJ: *Encylopaedia Judaica*
ESV: English Standard Version (2001)
Ger: German
GNT: Greek New Testament
Grk: Greek
HALOT: *Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Koehler and Baumgartner)
HCSB: Holman Christian Standard Bible (2004)
Heb: Hebrew
HNV: Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible
IDB: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*
IDBSup: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement*
ISBE: *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*
IVPBBC: *IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old & New Testament)*
Jastrow: *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature* (Marcus Jastrow)
JBK: New Jerusalem Bible-Koren (2000)
JETS: *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
KJV: King James Version
Lattimore: The New Testament by Richmond Lattimore (1996)
LITV: *Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* by Jay P. Green (1986)
LES: *Lexham English Septuagint* (2019)
LS: *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott)
LSJM: *Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott-Jones-McKenzie)

LXE: *Septuagint with Apocrypha* by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)
LXX: Septuagint
m. Mishnah
MT: Masoretic Text
NASB: New American Standard Bible (1977)
NASU: New American Standard Update (1995)
NBCR: *New Bible Commentary: Revised*
NEB: New English Bible (1970)
Nelson: *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words*
NETS: New English Translation of the Septuagint (2007)
NIB: *New Interpreter's Bible*
NIDB: *New International Dictionary of the Bible*
NIV: New International Version (1984)
NJB: New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic (1985)
NJPS: Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures (1999)
NKJV: New King James Version (1982)
NRSV: New Revised Standard Version (1989)
NLT: New Living Translation (1996)
NT: New Testament
OT: Old Testament
REB: Revised English Bible (1989)
RSV: Revised Standard Version (1952)
t. Tosefta
Tanach (Tanakh): the Old Testament
Thayer: *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*
TDNT: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
TLV: Messianic Jewish Family Bible—Tree of Life Version (2014)
TNIV: Today's New International Version (2005)
TWOT: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*
UBSHNT: United Bible Societies' 1991 Hebrew New Testament revised edition
v(s). verse(s)
Vine: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*
Vul: Latin Vulgate
YLT: Young's Literal Translation (1862/1898)
WMB: World Messianic Bible (2020)

Introduction

Messianic Beginnings has been compiled to be a primer for the wide number of people—mainly from evangelical Protestant backgrounds—who are being drawn into a more comprehensive grasp of the ancient roots of our Biblical faith. As a family which has been active in the Messianic movement since 1995, a workbook on the subject is needed for those who are being prompted into a pursuit and examination of the Hebraic and Jewish Roots of their faith, and who want to truly live like the first disciples and followers of Israel's Messiah. An introductory guide to the many issues we have encountered, has been made available to help the many who are new to this walk.

When our family was first led into the Messianic movement, we began by becoming part of a Messianic Jewish congregation. We were incredibly blessed by the Lord as the Holy Spirit began to reveal a more Hebraic and authentically Jewish perspective on how we could worship, understand, and experience Him more fully. From the very start, we were like dry sponges soaking up the "living water" from the teaching that we were receiving.

We were non-Jewish Believers with only a cursory understanding of Judaism, and were being exposed to a style of worship which in many respects was foreign to what we had been accustomed to as standard, Church going, American evangelical Christians. Within weeks, we found ourselves attending the Friday evening and Saturday morning worship services. We were exposed to a Torah scroll, Hebrew liturgy and music, and Davidic dance. We learned what "kosher" was, and how the Sabbath was about abstaining from our labors. We learned about the Biblical holidays or appointed times, and what they communicated about the First and Second Comings of the Messiah. Our understanding of what God expected of us was changing, and our weekly routine was being radically altered. For a season, we attended this Messianic congregation while still going to our non-denominational church on Sunday. But after a while we realized that we were not being spiritually fed at Church as we once had been, **and that the Father wanted us in the Messianic movement.**

One of the first things that really ministered to my wife and me was the worship music. Many times during praise and worship, tears would well up in our eyes, as we sensed that we had finally "come home" after a long journey, and were at long last where we were supposed to be. It did not matter that we did not fully understand it at the time. We found ourselves singing the Psalms and actual texts

of Scripture put to music. Many of the lyrics were in English and Hebrew. We started to learn the language of the Patriarchs through the repetition of songs. Our spirits soared as we sensed a more profound connection with the ancient holy ones or saints who had gone before us.

We were also introduced to the study of the Torah, or the five Books of Moses (the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), on a weekly basis. We began to understand that reviewing the challenges of the Ancient Israelites in a systematic and consistent way enhanced our personal identification with them. After all, these were the ancestors of our faith, and what happened to them in the past was to add great dimension and understanding to the whole of the Biblical narrative and our view of the entire Scriptures. It was logical for us to study their lives and analyze how they handled the circumstances of their respective walks. We believed we were finally receiving a long lost foundation to our faith that we had not received in evangelical Protestantism, where our Scripture studies primarily focused on the Apostolic Writings (New Testament).

After a few months of attending this Messianic Jewish congregation on a regular basis (1995), we were given the opportunity to become members. After praying about this, my wife and I concluded that the Lord wanted us to participate in the new members class, so we enrolled for the eight-week course. All of us in the new members class were given two books to read: *Growing to Maturity* by Daniel C. Juster (Denver: The Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations Press, 1987) and *Our Hands Are Stained With Blood* by Michael L. Brown (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image 1992).

As hungry Believers who wanted to become involved with this congregation, we read through the materials and faithfully attended the new members classes. We were learning so much about the Jewish Roots of our faith that we really did not have the time to thoroughly analyze all of the material being presented. *Growing to Maturity*, for example, was written primarily as a tool for training new Jewish Believers in the faith. For the most part, we found the book to be very enlightening on a number of subjects. Michael Brown's book was a lengthy exposition, as its subtitle suggests, of the "Tragic Story of the 'Church' and the Jewish People." As a family which valued history, this book helped fill in some of the gaps in our thinking about varied aspects of the historical Church. With these two books as our primers to understand the Messianic movement, we began our journey with a commitment to this Messianic Jewish congregation.

Both of these books did an admirable job of igniting our family's interest in the purposes of the Messianic movement, and the new lifestyle we were embarking upon. For the first time in our spiritual journey, we were beginning to look at the history of the faith with a true foundation in the Tanakh (Old Testament). As we progressed in those years, we were exposed to more resources which helped us search out the origins of our faith, and how the first Believers in Yeshua the

Messiah (Jesus Christ) actually lived. We spent a substantial amount of time analyzing the culture and times in which the First Century Disciples and Apostles lived, and how they approached their relationship with the God of Israel. We discovered some very basic things which had not necessarily been taught to us in Church settings.

For centuries, much of the teaching about the practices of the early followers of Yeshua had been altered because of the forces of history, and the transfer of the center of authority from Jerusalem to Rome in the early centuries of Christianity. With the Jewish revolt against Rome in 67 C.E. and subsequent destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 C.E., anti-Semitism arose in the Roman Empire. Over time, the early Jewish leadership of the Body of Messiah died out and was replaced by non-Jewish leadership, with many leaders who had little to no understanding of Judaism, and were instead trained in classical Hellenistic or Greek philosophy. Interpretations of the writings of the Apostles were no longer rooted in the Tanakh (Old Testament) to the degree they should have been, but were often based in the reason and logic of those such as Plato and Aristotle. These things, among many other factors, gave ultimate rise to the Roman Catholic Church and its ecclesiastical order. Its overwhelming influence on Western Civilization significantly changed the ancient ways of the Jewish Apostles. When the Protestant Reformation arose in Europe, Catholicism had so dominated Christian thinking that the Reformers could only go so far in their pursuit of the truth, because they often had little understanding or background knowledge of the First Century Judaism in which Yeshua and His followers lived.

The Holy One in His sovereignty allowed the Protestant Reformers to alter the Catholic approach to the faith. *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture Only) and *Sola Fide* (Faith Alone) became battle cries for the faithful who were finally concluding that they could personally approach God for the forgiveness of their sins and justification without going through a priest. Men and women did not have to pay indulgences to receive salvation, as it was available freely through the sacrifice of Yeshua. But because the early Reformers were principally former Catholics, they could only do so much and there were limitations. There was still theological and social anti-Semitism in Protestantism. It was obviously not the time for the final restoration back to the original practices of the First Century holy ones or saints to occur.

Surprisingly, it was not until the Enlightenment of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, with the emancipation of Jews in Europe, that reasonable Jewish-Christian dialogue would begin occurring for Christian theologians to start to understand what a rich heritage we have in Judaism. Hebraic studies, not only in the Hebrew language, but also in Rabbinics and in Jewish methods of examining the Scriptures, began being explored by Christians, and many can now truly see the Messiah for who He is in all of the pages of the Bible.

Today, after five centuries since the start of the Protestant Reformation, we see a new movement taking place among followers of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It began with the rise of the Messianic Jewish movement in the mid-Twentieth Century. We are very grateful for the Messianic Jewish Believers who the Father has used in the past half-century: to see Jewish people come to saving faith in Israel's Messiah, retaining their Jewish heritage, and raising awareness of the centrality of Israel in God's plan for the ages! Yet, the Messianic movement has expanded substantially to include more than just Jewish people, as many non-Jewish Believers have been called by God to co-labor with their Jewish brothers and sisters in the restoration of Israel (cf. Acts 1:6).

Since the late 1960s, Messianic Jewish congregations have been responsible for much of what is happening today as the Messianic movement grows in significant numbers. They have been planted all over North America and the world, largely as outreaches to present the Jewish community with the good news. Many Jewish followers of the Messiah Yeshua have endured considerable persecution, and have often been ostracized by their Jewish family because of their faith—and in spite of this they have remained constant.

However, even though Messianic Judaism began as an evangelical outreach of Jewish Believers to fellow Jews, today it is important to understand that many Messianic Jewish congregations have a large number of non-Jewish Believers. Over the years, as Messianic Judaism has grown and matured, many changes have occurred. The demographic profile has shifted, as non-Jewish Believers have been investigating their Jewish Roots and faith heritage in Israel's Scriptures, and have been entering into the Messianic community. At many Messianic Jewish congregations, the actual Jewish population of some of these congregations is less than twenty percent. In some extreme cases, there are only a mere handful of Jews.

Is this only a coincidence? Or is it a sign from the Holy One that He is indeed returning us all back to the faith practices and experiences of the original Disciples of Yeshua? Obviously, this occurrence begs many important questions that will be asked in the coming years, examined in further studies—and may not be fully answered until the Messiah returns. For the first time since the First Century, though, we are witnessing Jews and non-Jews coming together in the unity of the Messiah Yeshua and worshipping Him in a way that is reminiscent of the early Believers. This transformation is not without its issues, both spiritual and theological. But today, we are discovering many people who are hungry for more information about the Messianic movement and its purposes, and they are not afraid to change. **Are you one of these people?**

In our years of pursuing the Holy One of Israel upon entering the Messianic community of faith, we had never come across a book that could be used for basic instruction about many of the areas of life which often take a radical course change

as the Messianic lifestyle is embraced. We could never find a publication which laid out what a few of the key components of the Messianic experience were all about. This workbook, ***Messianic Beginnings: An Introductory Study,*** has been put together to help you in your involvement in today's Messianic movement.

Messianic Beginnings has been compiled with elementary information about the Messianic movement. Those coming into this understanding and who follow this study have a basic primer for proper instruction. This workbook has been arranged as an easy 12-week study, which you can use in a Bible study setting with other people, or as a personal study for yourself. Some may prefer to go faster, others may prefer to go slower, but however you read the material and examine the Scriptures, you will be challenged. When you complete this study, we guarantee that you will have much to think and pray about!

This workbook examines a number of areas for study and discussion. It is designed to be a study guide which will prompt questions for personal reflection or group discussion. In this publication you will be presented the following questions:

- Why should we study the Scriptures of Israel?
- Why do we need the Torah?
- Why do we observe the seventh-day Sabbath?
- Why do we celebrate the Biblical festivals?
- Why do we eat Biblically kosher?
- How do we overcome the hurdles to the Messianic lifestyle?
- What about the Name of God?
- Are Israel and the Church separate?
- How do we approach the end-times?
- What contribution are you making to Jewish evangelism?

We trust that as these questions are fairly, and above all lovingly answered, that you will want to further embrace the Messianic lifestyle and experience more! We trust that you will recognize that you need to prepare yourself, your family, and in the process posterity, for the eventual return of the Messiah Himself. The end-time Believers will both have trust in Yeshua, and be keeping the commandments (Revelation 12:17; 14:12).

We understand as a family that the narrow path toward a Messianic lifestyle has a number of challenges along the way. There are changes to be made, as people leave previous religious experiences behind, and enter into a faith community which is still growing and maturing. *Many do not understand what this is all about.* Given time and patience and longsuffering, and the study and examination which is required of all of us as Believers, if we are truly in the will of God and we demonstrate being transformed more and more into His likeness, those around us will have no choice but to ask: "Why?"

We remember how useful books have been in our pursuit of truth. Our prayer is that *Messianic Beginnings* will give you just enough information so that you will