

# OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS



February 2007



AVOIDING  
FRUITLESS DISCUSSION

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#### STATEMENT OF BELIEF

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.

There is only one assembly of chosen ones/elect, the people of Israel, of which all Believers in Messiah are a part. God does not have two groups of elect: Israel and "the Church."

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

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

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# OIM Update February 2007

by Mark Huey

This month, it has come to our ministry's attention that some of the insidious works of the deceiver are causing many to subtly, if not directly, challenge the Deity of the Messiah Yeshua. Without going into all of the details, the emerging Messianic community of faith continues to be the target of the enemy's darts. These attacks are ostensibly designed to discredit the Hebraic Roots of our faith and Messianic walk by leading some into denying that Yeshua is God in the flesh. Needless to say, concerted prayer is required to combat this problem. We all must ask our Heavenly Father to pour out His gifts of discernment on those who are not testing the spirits, *as the Scripture warns us all to test the spirits:*

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, **but test the spirits to see whether they are from God**, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Yeshua the Messiah has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Yeshua is not from God; this is the *spirit* of the antimessiah, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world" (1 John 4:1-3).

Please realize that many people who use the Word of God for instruction can quote it chapter and verse. They might be quoting verses just like those above with one interpretation that is absolutely contrary to the one you believe by faith and revelation from the Holy Spirit. The simple phrase, "Yeshua the Messiah has come in the flesh is from God" does mean that He entered into the world as a human being, but it does not exclusively mean this. One must also recognize, as John later describes, "Whoever confesses that Yeshua is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God" (1 John 4:15). **Yeshua's origin is from God as God's Son.** Concluding and understanding that Yeshua is God in the flesh comes by faith and the inherent indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. As the Apostle Paul says, one has to have the eyes of the heart enlightened (Ephesians 1:18) to what the Spirit is saying in order to understand spiritual truths:

"But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one" (1 Corinthians 2:14-15).

I would seriously caution you, brothers and sisters, about what you are letting enter into your hearts. While my heart has been heavy about these matters, I have been prompted to write a short testimonial about the walk of

faith that has been such a blessing to our household. Faith is the only thing that can help you endure the crises that we face—crises that will intensify as the Messianic community continues to grow. If you have been weighed down by these things as I have, allow me to encourage each and every one of you to zealously contend for the faith that you have been given. The author of Hebrews tells us that having faith is absolutely essential for pleasing the Lord:

**“And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him*”** (Hebrews 11:6).

Perhaps one of the most exciting aspects of being a Believer in Yeshua is the opportunity or privilege of living a life based on faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I cannot imagine anything more exciting than reading or hearing His Word, and absolutely believing that it applies directly to you! Hopefully, you will be able to identify with times in your life when God’s Word so penetrated your soul that you categorically knew that He was directing you on your personal spiritual journey.

I can vividly remember a conversation back in 1997 with a Messianic Jewish friend, who was listening to my thoughts, as I was thinking out loud about some critical life decisions about leaving the business world and dedicating my time, talents, resources, and energies to ministerial endeavors. Having received a gentle nudging from the Holy Spirit in the previous weeks—and having analyzed my current living circumstances versus the opportunities presented—I was fervently seeking the Father’s will for my life and my family’s future. Apart from my wife, sharing my thoughts with a few respected counselors was a discipline that I had developed years earlier by embracing the wisdom found in the Proverbs: “Where there is no guidance the people fall, but in abundance of counselors there is victory” (Proverbs 11:14). For nearly twenty years as a Christian, I had been able to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit through those from whom I sought counsel and benefited immensely.

However, this time it was different. I was not dealing with personal issues or marital challenges or business decisions. Instead, I was considering leaving the comfort of making a good living in the commercial real estate business, where I thought “walking by faith” meant praying that multiple million-dollar deals would close so that I could earn a commission. To potentially obfuscate my decision, three years earlier I had married the love of my life, who as a young widow had three children that I adopted in the first year of our marriage. Having known Margaret in college during our youth was a blessing, especially since we both placed a high priority on higher education for our children. But then, as I was facing some radically life altering choices, my two daughters from a previous marriage and Margaret’s two older children meant that we had four teenagers who were just a few short years away from entering college. One of the biggest questions I had for God was just

how was I going to make enough money, or rather, how was He going to provide enough resources to pay for college—especially when given normal matriculation dates, we would have four children in college simultaneously?

In my mental deliberations, I cannot tell you how many times I repeated a verse back to God that I had memorized in the first year of my spiritual journey. For years of entrepreneurial efforts, I really believed the principle that by “seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, that all these things would be added to you” (Matthew 6:33). Since becoming a Believer, I definitely thought that I was seeking the Kingdom of God in all of my business dealings and God was blessing my efforts. But let’s face it: when you have a legitimate business enterprise and work diligently at your trade, you have a great opportunity to be rewarded financially for your endeavors.

However, as I understood it, the ministry was not like business venturing. Now, rather than serving mammon, or a combination of mammon and God, you were required to serve God and Him alone. You were to look to Him exclusively for your provision. After all, are we not commanded to work—with Him being the Provider? While I understood those principles in theory, the practical application side was sorely lean on my end. What was I going to do? Was I truly seeking the Kingdom of God? I only then got my answer in the conversation referred to earlier with one of my advisors. Without him realizing the impact of what the Spirit was speaking through him, I received an admonition from the Scriptures that absolutely moved my spirit and altered my thinking. Little did I know some ten years ago that one verse could have such a long-term impact on a walk of faith that attempts to please the Holy One of Israel!

As I was describing my dilemma to my friend, the Holy Spirit prompted him to share with me some words of Yeshua that are recorded in Luke’s Gospel. For contextual purposes, Yeshua is being approached by some of His disciples who sincerely desire to follow Him. After describing some of the pitfalls of attempting to follow after the Messiah, His summary statement is the verse that absolutely convicted me in the depth of my soul:

“As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, ‘I will follow You wherever You go.’ And Yeshua said to him, ‘The foxes have holes and the birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.’ And He said to another, ‘Follow Me.’ But he said, ‘Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.’ But He said to him, ‘Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.’ Another also said, ‘I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home.’ But Yeshua said to him, ‘**No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God**’” (Luke 9:57-62).

Quite frankly, I was not concerned about my housing, burying the dead, or even saying good-bye to my loved ones when making this decision. Instead, I was being challenged by the Holy Spirit to put my hand to the plow of min-

istry and endure the consequences. When I thought about the concept of “looking back,” I concluded that what Yeshua meant was that once you have made the willful choice to enter the ministry, you were not supposed to quit. It was an all or nothing proposition for life. To accentuate His point, if you do quit, then you are not fit for the Kingdom of God. That was surely a heavy word to digest.

As I took it to prayer and discussed it with my wife, we both realized that together the decision to enter into ministry was a very serious step. We fervently prayed and asked the Father to give us some confirmation that He was indeed orchestrating this invitation to serve Him and work full-time in His Kingdom’s work. Through a series of circumstances, the corroboration we were seeking materialized, and together we concluded that we would follow Him and His cloud of leading in our collective walk of faith.

Ironically for the past ten years, when things have been extremely rough and the temptation to return to other work to make ends meet arise, I am reminded of this Scripture. Great comfort does come from recognizing that the walk of faith modeled by the forefathers of our faith is not without travail, as their testimonies attest. It is reasonable to conclude that we also will have many trials as we go about the Father’s work of restoration in the age we live. The key of course, is to continue to walk by faith and understand that “Faith gives substance to our hopes, and makes us certain of realities we do not see. It is for their faith that the men of old stand on record” (Hebrews 11:1-2, NEB).

It is reasonable to conclude that perhaps in some way, if the figures of old “gained approval” (NASU) or “were commended” (NIV), that we also will be fit for the Kingdom of God. The key to doing this, of course, is to work in the Kingdom in the same manner that a farmer plows his field in a straight line. He does this by focusing his eye on a distant object at the end of the field and not deviating from one side to the other. In a similar fashion, those of us who plow the fields of God’s Kingdom must constantly keep our eyes fixed on Yeshua:

“Fixing our eyes on Yeshua, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2).

If you desire to walk by faith, there is no other place to focus your attention than on Yeshua. **As God made manifest to us in the flesh**, He is not only the Author of our faith—but the One who is able to bring us into final perfection, when we depart these mortal vessels!

Until the restoration of all things...

William Mark Huey

## Avoiding Fruitless Discussion

by Mark Huey

It is readily recognized by most in the Messianic community of faith that a wide variety of teaching is currently available to those seeking instruction. The advent and proliferation of access to a virtual cornucopia of divergent thoughts, simply by typing a few choice words into any of the search engines on the Internet, has propagated an explosion in knowledge gathering. Some being beleaguered by the information overload believe that the age foreseen by Daniel, as related to him by an angelic vision, appears to be upon the world:

“But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; **many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase**” (Daniel 12:2-4).

However, rather than needlessly debate the possibility that intercontinental flights constitute a “going back and forth,” or that the Internet is exponentially increasing the availability of knowledge, there is one chatty matter that needs some serious scrutiny among those seeking truth. Apparently in these modern times, many of those in search of God have an innate propensity to engage in idle or foolish talk that lamentably has no redeeming value. This is not an apocalyptic phenomenon limited to the end of days as travel and technology expand, but rather symptomatic of a pattern since the time of the Apostles.

In Paul’s letters to his disciples Timothy and Titus, the Greek terms *mataiologos* (ματαιολόγος), meaning “*talking idly, at random*” (LS), and *mataiologia* (ματαιολογία), or “*empty, fruitless talk*” (BDAG) are employed by him to teach them about the dangers of fruitless discussion or empty talk in the congregations they oversee. These terms are a contraction of two Greek words that are more prevalent in the Scriptures: *metaios* (μάταιος), meaning “*vain, empty, idle, trifling, frivolous*” (LS), and the verb *legow* (λέγω), largely meaning “*to speak*.” Paul, a student of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), was certainly aware of the snares and troubles associated with idle, vain, and foolish talk. Simeon, the son of Gamaliel and a contemporary of Paul, warns against this in the Mishnah tractate *Pirkei Avot* (Sayings of the Fathers):

“Simeon his son says, ‘All my life I grew up among the sages, and I found nothing better for a person [the body] than silence. And not the learning is the main thing but the doing. **And whoever talks too much causes sin**” (m.*Avot* 1:17).

This understanding affirms the admonition communicated in the opening verse of the Book of Psalms that instructs human beings to avoid the counsel of the wicked by not standing in the path of sinners or sitting in the seat or listening to those that scoff or mock the Word of God with their mellifluous words:

“How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers!” (Psalm 1:1).

Reading what Paul specifically tells Timothy brings to light considerable understanding of things that are categorically applicable to many modern Messianic controversies.

“As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than *furthering* the administration of God which is by faith. **But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion [*mataiologia*], wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.** But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted” (1 Timothy 1:3-11).

After making some opening salutary remarks to Timothy (1 Timothy 1:1-2), Paul instructs him to rebuke certain individuals for teaching strange doctrines that center on myths and endless genealogies that lead to nothing but speculation. Those teachings were impeding the Divine training that focuses upon faith in the completed work of the Messiah Yeshua. Throughout the rest of 1 Timothy, Paul summarizes some of the character traits a person that God has called to be a teacher of His Word should have, specifically teachers of the Torah. This list of objectives includes having: His *agape* love for others, a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith demonstrated among other Believers.

Paul concisely addresses the paramount goals of Torah instruction.

Taking the time to consider each of these attributes, you should have them in mind when you are listening to or reading some of the teaching that is filtering into your heart and mind from your primary sources of instruction on the information highway. You might want to develop a mental checklist for discerning the origin of some of the instruction you are receiving. Consider asking yourself the following questions when you read or hear a teaching:

- Is this teaching encouraging unconditional love?
- Are these instructions helping me purify my heart?
- Is this information helping me develop a good conscience?
- Are these lessons increasing my genuine faith?

I believe that if you can do this, you will be able to mentally and spiritually construct a filter that discerns and rejects the idle talk of some who do not fully embrace—whether unknowingly or deceptively—the stated goals that Paul declares about proper Torah instruction.

Paul is forced to tell Timothy that some individuals will stray from these goals and succumb to fruitless discussion, even though they inadvertently think that they are Torah teachers who speak the Word of God with authority. After all, as Paul further expounds, the Torah is absolutely good when it is used properly to help lead the unrighteous, as listed, to faith in the Messiah. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul calls the Torah a tutor or pedagogue (Grk. *paidagōgos*, παιδαγωγός) that is to show someone the need for a Divine Savior:

“Therefore the Law has become our tutor *to lead us* to Messiah, so that we may be justified by faith” (Galatians 3:24).

In Paul’s letter to Titus, he employs the term *mataiologos* in his description regarding a proper overseer:

“For the overseer must be above reproach as God’s steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. For there are many **rebellious men, empty talkers** [*mataiologos*] **and deceivers**, especially those of the circumcision, who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not *teach* for the sake of sordid gain” (Titus 1:7-11).

In this instance, did you notice the other two types of people that are coupled with “vain talkers” (KJV) that just might give you an indica-

tion of the character of those who engage in such fruitless discussion? These teachers are rebellious or not subject to God. Paul designates them as being a *phrenapateis* (φρεναπάτης), either “a soul-deceiver” (LS) or “a mind-deceiver” (Vine). Their words are able to lead others away from the proper path of faith. To compound his warning, Paul adds that these people teach things for the sake of “base advantage and disreputable gain” (Amplified Bible). In other words, these teachers have motivations for teaching that are not pure, but rather are usually the byproduct of another negative attribute that Paul calls “selfish ambition,” something that he was very familiar with in his ministry:

“Some, to be sure, are preaching Messiah even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; the latter *do it* out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; **the former proclaim Messiah out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives**, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment” (Philippians 1:15-17).

James the Just gives us a more complete definition of the sort of “wisdom” derived from selfish ambition consists of, as he compares it to true, godly wisdom:

“Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and **selfish ambition in your heart**, do not be arrogant and *so* lie against the truth. **This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.** For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And **the seed whose fruit is righteousness** is sown in peace by those who make peace” (James 3:13-18).

As you can read, any teaching or instruction that is motivated by selfish ambition with the goal of sordid gain in reality is Earthly or unspiritual, natural or soulish, worldly-minded, and is demonic or from the Adversary. However, did you notice that James concludes this description by employing the agricultural example of good wisdom that bears the fruit of righteousness? My friends, if the instruction we embrace and consume is from the Holy Spirit, then it should be bearing the righteous fruit of the Spirit that in many respects, resemble the goals established for Timothy by Paul. Read this listing of the fruit of the Spirit that Paul writes about to the Galatians, and compare how it lines up with *agape* love, a pure heart, good conscience, and sincere

faith:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23).

**Do you understand how important these things truly are?** For far too long, much of the Messianic community has been feasting on teaching that can generally be regarded as “fruitless discussion.” As a result, many Messianic Believers have become spiritually anemic by absorbing and retaining a great deal of spiritual junk food. In far too many cases, some have atrophied to the point of denying the Deity of Yeshua, and a number have left the faith and converted to Judaism. In some extreme cases, some have cast aside a belief in God and have turned toward atheism. This is a lamentable testimony, and we all have the collective responsible to see that it is deterred as much as possible.

For the past forty years, as the Holy Spirit has been giving people greater understanding about the restoration of all Israel, the enemy of our souls has been hard at work attempting to subvert the will of the Father. Considerable error under the monikers of “deeper truths,” “mystical understanding,” or “hidden messages in the Hebrew” have been taught without being challenged enough from those who should know better. The fruitless discussion on superfluous topics that do not advance the goals proclaimed by the Holy Spirit through Paul has led to considerable strife, dissension, and substantial division within the Body of Messiah. It has weakened us to be about the work of the gospel in today’s world.

But realistically, this pattern is one that has repeated itself certainly since the days of the Apostles, and was certainly present during the rebellious periods of Ancient Israel falling into idolatry. We have the advantage of reading about all of these things in Scripture—**so we do not repeat them.** Should we not have matured from little children to adults in the faith—so we can overcome evil and love of the world? Consider what the Apostle John says about this:

“I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake. I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word

of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one. Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:12-15).

One of the elementary understandings of the Bible, according to the author of Hebrews, is in understanding the superiority of Yeshua's priesthood over that of the Levitical priesthood. Yeshua's coming to Earth to die for us and His exaltation to the right hand of the Father have changed the spiritual economy of the Torah. Yet today, there are a few Messianic Believers who insist that the Levitical priesthood is still required for the atonement of sin—perhaps not understanding that some things have changed. They fail to see that the Levitical priesthood, as important as it was, was incomplete as it could never offer a permanent atonement for sin. Yeshua the Messiah today functions in the office of Melchizedek, and is ever able to intercede for us in Heaven. But notice how this is to be something that all of us *already understand*, and hopefully do not need to be told over and over again:

"In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Concerning him we have much to say, and *it is hard to explain*, since you have become dull of hearing. **For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.** For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. **But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil"** (Hebrews 5:7-14).

As a Messianic Believer, are you truly striving to mature in your relationship with the Lord? If you are, then I would encourage you to make sure that you are achieving the goals listed by Paul in 1 Timothy 1:5. The next time you expose yourself to some teaching, or type in a few key words on a search engine, ask God to strengthen and enlighten you as you discern whether that teaching or article is achieving these goals. If you are *not* learning more about being transformed by God's love, being exhorted to purify your heart, having your conscience cleansed, and your genuine faith expanded, **then flee from**

**whatever “fruitless discussion” or “idle talk” that you are absorbing.**

If you fail to do this, then I believe you may not only fall into the trap of repeating the fruitless teachings to others, but worse, be stymied in your own maturation process to the point of confusion and potential corruption of your faith. Consider the following proverb:

“Like a dog that returns to its vomit, is a fool who repeats his folly. Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him” (Proverbs 26:11-12).

The Apostle Peter appropriates this concept, employing the term *mataioteis* (ματαιότης), which fully means “**state of being without use or value, emptiness, futility, purposelessness, transitoriness**” (BDAG):

“For speaking out arrogant *words* of **vanity** [*mataioteis*] they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, promising them freedom while **they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.** For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Messiah Yeshua, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, **the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness,** than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them. It has happened to them according to the true proverb, ‘**A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT**’ and, ‘**A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire**’” (2 Peter 2:18-22).

Do you want to be one who is found unusable – if not utterly worthless – to God, because you failed to allow Him to mold your character into a person who could impact the world around you? These are difficult words to consider, and they encapsulate the dilemma that today’s Messianic community faces. How are we to grow and find ourselves usable to make a difference in the lives of others?

In the days ahead, as the availability of information continues to increase and those who are seeking God proliferate, we will have to deal with increasingly more complicated issues. If we do not discipline ourselves with some parameters for searching out Biblical truths, we are going to watch as many individuals who are wise in their own eyes return to the vomit of the rotten fruit they have been dispensing. This is not a pretty picture to imagine. Let us be sure it does not happen, and continually focus ourselves on who Yeshua is in our lives – and most importantly how we can live like Him so we can change our society and share the gospel of salvation!

Until the restoration of all things...

# NEW FAQ ADDITIONS

*from TNN Online*

**Denying Messiah:** Why do you think there are people in the Messianic movement today denying Yeshua as the Messiah?

There are a variety of reasons why some people in the Messianic movement are denying Yeshua as the Messiah. The first reason is that we are in the Last Days and that there will be apostasy from the faith (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4). The second reason is that there are a variety of deceptive books and websites under the label of being “Messianic” that some have consulted that plant seeds of doubt into the minds of people. The third reason is that it is likely that many people who are denying Yeshua's Divinity, and then His Messiahship, *never* truly knew Him as their Personal Savior.

One pattern that is very dangerous is the idea that one must “question everything.” Many of those who teach that we must “question everything” have not considered the ramifications of what they are saying. Eventually a person will ask questions that cannot be answered, and the result can be denial of Yeshua and ultimately denial of the existence of God. The Hebraic mind accepts God for who He says He is because we cannot fully understand the Almighty. The Biblical pattern is *not* to “question everything,” but rather to seek confirmation of something (Deuteronomy 17:16; 19:15; Matthew 18:16; 2 Corinthians 13:1; Titus 5:19; Hebrews 10:28).

**Christian Scholars:** Why does today's Messianic movement generally frown on the works of Christian Biblical scholarship?

Today's Messianic movement does have a significant challenge when it comes to considering the theological contributions made by Christian Biblical scholarship. The reasons for this are varied and complex, but they largely have to relate to perceived Christian animosity toward the Torah. It is very true that many Christian theologians have a negative and pessimistic attitude when it comes to the Torah or Law of Moses and how it is talked about in the Apostolic Scriptures (New Testament). But this is certainly not all Christian theologians, and theological works and commentaries from the past thirty to fifty years have become increasingly more Jewish-sensitive and cognizant of Jewish theological views of Scripture. The problem with this is not that there are theologians who are writing commentaries with more Jewish opinions in mind; it is that your average pastor and/or layperson is unaware or uninformed of these resources.

Ignorance of knowing about important trends such as the New Perspective in Pauline studies—a renaissance of understanding Paul as a First Century rabbi—even carries over into the Messianic movement. While it is true that New Perspective advocates are not going to teach that today's Christians should follow the Torah as Messianics do, they will teach that Paul had a much more moderate view on the Torah than is perceived by much of today's Christianity. This is

certainly a step in the right direction. The rise of so-called "Karaite" interpretations of the Torah in the independent Messianic movement comes as a direct result of not recognizing and interpreting Paul as a First Century Pharisee—something that many Christian theologians are beginning to recognize.

One of the things that Messianics today are often not aware of is the fact that Jewish Biblical scholarship—which often is consulted by Messianic teachers—is largely polarized between the extreme-Right and extreme-Left. If one reads the Orthodox Jewish *ArtScroll Chumash*, and then compares it to the *Jewish Study Bible*, he or she will see two largely different points of view on an issue. One will advocate that Moses wrote every single letter of the Torah, and then the other will tell you that Moses may not have existed. One will advocate that the Israelites' conquest of Canaan included more than is mentioned in the Biblical text, and the other will say that it never took place. Consequently, many Messianics today will only examine Orthodox and/or Chassidic Jewish opinions on certain subjects that often disregard ancient history and criticism from skeptics.

Conservative, evangelical Christian scholars often compose the middle position between the Right and the Left on these issues. While affirming the historicity of a key event like the Exodus, evangelicals are willing to place the Exodus in the context of Ancient Egypt. Evangelicals are willing to engage with liberal criticism, and place a much higher value on historical and linguistic studies of the Scriptures than most in the Orthodox Jewish community. Interestingly enough, there are more Christian commentaries on the books of the Torah than there are Jewish commentaries. Casting these aside as though they have no value is ill-advised in a movement that will have to increasingly deal with more criticism against the Scriptures—particularly the Torah or Pentateuch because of the "modern age" we live in. Furthermore, these same commentaries will point out Messianic symbolism that is fulfilled in the life of Yeshua, whereas most Jewish commentaries—if not ignoring them—will discredit the life of Yeshua.

Our ongoing challenge as the Messianic community and our own Biblical scholarship relates to how we can incorporate the best of Jewish and Christian scholarship and make it our own. We have a shared theological heritage with both the Synagogue *and* the Church. We cannot disregard either one, but have to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of both. Doing this properly will admittedly take time.

## **PRAYER REQUESTS FROM OIM:**

**\*\*\*A replacement vehicle for John's 20-year old Jeep Cherokee**

**Audio-visual equipment for DVD production**

## NEW AUDIO CD TEACHINGS!



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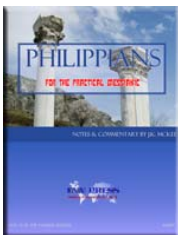
### THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: PERFECTION OF THE MIND

Every one of us as Believers in Yeshua the Messiah is to have a mind oriented toward God and His work in the world. The Holy Spirit within us is to transform us to be able to think like Yeshua were He living today. A mind empowered by the Holy Spirit can comprehend difficult concepts in Scripture, and apply them to increasingly complex circumstances in the modern world. How is a Messianic mind guided by the Holy Spirit supposed to function? These and other critical issues are considered in this important teaching.

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### COMING SOON: PHILIPPIANS FOR THE PRACTICAL MESSIANIC



In the forthcoming commentary *Philippians for the Practical Messianic*, TNN Online editor J.K. McKee addresses many of the avoided issues that this text asks Messianic Believers. He takes into account the First Century Jewish and Roman background of Paul's letter. He also considers the large amount of intertextual references that Philippians makes to the Tanach (Old Testament), deeply embedded in Paul's vocabulary and mannerisms. Most importantly, he considers the centrality of Yeshua for Paul, and how all human achievements pale in comparison to who He should be for us as born again Believers who have experienced His transforming power.

**Coming Spring 2007**