

OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS



October 2007



FAITH FOR ALL SEASONS

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

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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.

For a fuller Statement of Faith, consult the OIM website

OIM Update

October 2007

by Mark Huey

As October commences, we have just completed celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles, and OIM has just finished another year of **Virtual Sukkot** teachings and exhortations. It is a great blessing to once again be warmly thanked and appreciated for our efforts!

Through our seasonal postings beginning with *Yom Teruah/Rosh HaShanah* and ending on *Shemini Atzeret*, we have been giving those who are pursuing a Messianic lifestyle some instructions for not just observing these sacred times on the outside, **but actually participating in them**. It is our firm conviction that *if you have faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and are a part of His people via His Son, Yeshua, then you should find ways to participate in all of His feasts*.

seasonal changes
OBSERVANCE or PARTICIPATION?

But what does it mean to actually have “faith” in God? Does it mean that we just acknowledge His existence, and perhaps His presence once in a while? Is faith just a “mental ascent” – or is it something more? Does not faith evidence itself in actions as James the Just describes?

“What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? **Can that faith save him?** If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,’ and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself. But someone may *well* say, ‘You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, **and I will show you my faith by my works.**’ You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that **faith without works is useless?** Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? **You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;** and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS,’ and he was called the friend of God. You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? For just as the body without *the* spirit is dead, **so also faith without works is dead”** (James 2:14-26).

When you read this familiar passage, two statements really stand out

regarding the relationship of faith and works. James' words that "**faith without works is useless**" and "**faith without works is dead**" are very poignant, as they describe some of the required actions of those who have placed their trust in Yeshua. James asks his audience to consider the life examples of Abraham and Rahab, and how they acted upon their belief in God.

As we have just concluded the appointed times for this Fall, did you personally take the opportunity to exercise your faith by participating in these holy convocations in at least some form or fashion? Part of returning to our Father is the opportunity to please Him through our obedience to His commands. Leviticus 23 makes it clear that the appointed times are to be "**perpetual statute[s] throughout your generations in all your dwelling places**" (vs. 14, 21, 31, 41). This certainly indicates some level of permanency. As Messianic Believers today, we have the great opportunity and privilege to meet with our Creator during these special times. *This is where having faith and obeying Him merge together.* Do we not desire to please the Lord? Does not a loving child obey his parents? The author of Hebrews says that faith and seeking Him will bring great fulfillment:

"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).

For the past month, we as God's people have had a wonderful opportunity to please Him by exercising our faith by participating in the Fall Feasts. As a result of faithfully performing these instructions of the Lord, the process of coming to Him with repentant hearts is expected. We have a chance to reconsider once again who we are in relationship to Him, and how we can be empowered for yet another year of service in His Kingdom's work.

When we honestly and sincerely seek our Father, we are rewarded favorably with His pleasure. In the Scriptures, God has given us some annual times to expand our faith by performing critical spiritual actions. I hope and pray that you took the opportunity during the Fall Feasts to focus on Him and grow in your relationship with Him. Our Father is pleased whenever we turn to Him, and I cannot think of a better "new year" resolution to commit to, than to exercise faith by performing some actions that evidence great trust in Him. Do you want to be just a passive observer, or an *active participant* in what God has instructed His people to do? **In this issue of OIM News, I have written the following article entitled, "Faith for All Seasons," which will hopefully encourage you to further embrace not just "living by faith" during the appointed times, but throughout the entire year as you accomplish God's purpose for your life!**

Until the restoration of all things...

William Mark Huey

Faith for All Seasons

by Mark Huey

While moving through the Fall Feasts of the Lord, a nagging question continually percolated in my thoughts, as one celebration and time of reflection transitioned into the next. For some reason, the thought that kept coming to my mind over and over, was the question: **“What does faith have to do with it?”** As I mulled over this thought from time to time, letting it penetrate my soul, I purposely blanked out all other distractions in order to seek an answer from the Lord. The one word that I kept hearing in response simply stated: **“Everything!”**

From the month of Elul, through *Yom Teruah/Rosh HaShanah* and the Ten Days of Awe to *Yom Kippur*, and finally *Sukkot*, I was challenged once again—as I am every year—with the annual opportunity to **exercise my faith** by actually participating in these proceedings in a meaningful way. I believe that exercising my faith, by truly doing something meaningful with these seasonal activities, has been not only a blessing to me and my family—but has also ministered to our Heavenly Father. The Creator God asks us to join with Him during these special times of year. He has given us His appointed times and holy convocations to celebrate the redemption that He has provided for us. By exercising obedience to His requests, I truly believe that our Father is pleased with those who make sincere, heart-felt attempts to honor these appointed times, reflecting on their current walk with Him and relationship with one another. **I hope and pray that you took the time to exercise your faithful obedience to Him through some kind of participation in this year’s Fall Feasts.**

Considering a variety of thoughts about my faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—as a result of placing my trust in Messiah Yeshua and His atoning work—I was reminded that in God’s mercy toward me and countless others, He has made a way for me to receive His blessings originally promised to Ancient Israel. For some years in my life as just an “average” Christian Believer, the words of the Torah had less significance in my walk, because I did not understand that I was *more than* at most “spiritual Israel.” **It was not until my wife Margaret and I went on a tour to Israel in 1994 that we began to see that we were actually a part of the Israel of God.** From that point onward, we have been diligently pursuing a Messianic lifestyle.

For the past thirteen years, the Holy Spirit has definitely been teaching and encouraging us to continue on the Messianic path. We have steadily been growing in our knowledge by not only adjusting our family lives, but also by sharing this realization with others through our ministerial efforts. We knew very little back in those early days of what we know today, and

are constantly amazed to see how people we interact with— who share our same convictions— were led by the Lord into the Messianic community.

During this season of *teshuvah* or repentance, one particular passage from Paul's letters came to mind frequently, as I pondered not only my walk of faith, **but the fact that my faith is actually a gift of God.** Paul writes non-Jewish Believers in the vicinity of Ephesus, telling them that via their faith in Yeshua they are adopted into the family of God. And, not only are they adopted into the family of God, but they have become citizens in the Commonwealth of Israel:

“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. **But God,** being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Messiah (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Messiah Yeshua, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Messiah Yeshua. **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.** For we are His workmanship, created in Messiah Yeshua for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called ‘Uncircumcision’ by the so-called ‘Circumcision,’ *which is performed in the flesh by human hands—remember that you were at that time separate from Messiah, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.* But now in Messiah Yeshua you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Messiah. **For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in [dogma], so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.** AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR; for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. **So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,** having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Messiah Yeshua Himself being the corner *stone*, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the

Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:1-22).

This passage of Scripture covers the whole gamut of life, from one's place as an unregenerate creature dead in trespasses and sin, to what happens when one is regenerated via trust in Yeshua and can be occupied by the Holy Spirit. As you consider this great transformation, you should be reminded of your former state of mind apart from the mercy of God. In blindness, you could not see the things of the Holy Spirit, you walked according to the ways of the world, and you were largely influenced by the forces of the enemy—who desires nothing less than to see you eternally condemned. As you might think back on that time, do you remember that you were beholden to a fleshly mind that was totally bankrupt, worthy of nothing more than God's wrath? These are not necessarily pleasant memories for any of us to recall, but they are real memories nevertheless.

In Ephesians, Paul describes the pivotal point in every Believer's life when one's destiny is radically changed from being a child of wrath to a child of the Living God. The famous life-altering declaration, "**But God,**" explains in understandable words the characteristics of mercy and love that are embodied fully in the God we serve. It is precisely because of God's great love to the entire world that He gives us not only the gift of salvation available via His Son Yeshua, but also that we can have a gift of faith that enables us to believe on Him. Beyond salvation, born again Believers are not only alive in Him, but also raised up and seated with Him in Heavenly places. This is difficult to fathom—apart from an almost tangible experience—which I hope you had when the Spirit of the Most High actually touched you, confirming in your heart that you had been born from above.

After one has had a genuine born again experience, he or she innately understands the meaning of being saved by God's grace. As Paul summarizes it, "**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, that no one should boast**" (Ephesians 2:8-9). Furthermore, as children of God, born again Believers should realize that they compose "**His workmanship, created in Messiah Yeshua for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them**" (Ephesians 2:10). While salvation is freely given by God's grace, He certainly expects us to walk in good works that demonstrate the transformation enacted within us.

One of the best things that we can do to demonstrate our faith is commemorate the appointed times of the Lord. **It is awesome every year to remember His commandments, and actually meet with Him when He requests.** Each of us as Messianic Believers has the profound opportunity to be blessed during these special seasons, and perhaps—in His own mysterious way—our Father can prepare you to testify to others of these blessings so that they too can be more intimate with Him. By being some of

those who are actually participating in the various Feasts of the Lord, we must all recognize that we are being noticed by not only our close family and friends, but also by Jews living all over the world who are taking note of what is going on. While on the one hand they feel that Jews who receive Yeshua may be mentally ill, they are truly perplexed when non-Jews follow the Torah and observe the appointed times.

In Ephesians 2 Paul explains that the work of Messiah Yeshua and His shed blood has removed the artificial barrier(s) between the Jewish people and the nations, that largely prohibit God's people from performing their Divine mission (Genesis 22:18; Deuteronomy 4:5-8). The understanding of what is commonly called "the one new man" (Ephesians 2:15) or "one new humanity" (NRSV)—both Jew and non-Jew united in Yeshua—is critical to properly comprehend what is happening today in the Messianic community. But what is most important for anyone to see—especially non-Jewish Believers who were "alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise" (Ephesians 2:11, RSV)—is that we all have complete access to God via the faith or trust we place in His Son. Earlier in his letter, Paul explains how Believers are adopted into the family of God:

"He predestined us to adoption as sons through Yeshua the Messiah to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Messiah, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Messiah would be to the praise of His glory" (Ephesians 1:5-12).

As adopted sons and daughters of the Most High via our faith in Messiah Yeshua and His atoning blood, we are all a part of the Commonwealth of Israel. Regardless of who we are in the flesh, **the requirements that God has placed upon Israel are applicable to all who believe in Him.** When a child of God comes to this realization, choices concerning whether or not you obey His commands become much narrower. All of a sudden, Scripture passages from places in the Gospels and Apostolic epistles begin to make more sense and take on a fuller context, as one begins to examine all of the Bible as relevant instruction. **Obedience in order to please our Heavenly Father becomes a joy, rather than being cumbersome.** Our love for the Father and the Son, because of what has been accomplished within

us via the gift of eternal life, is a great motivation for obedience. The Apostle John's words fully summarize what each one of us should be experiencing in our spiritual journey:

"Whoever believes that Yeshua is the Messiah is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him. 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. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world-- our faith" (1 John 5:1-4).

Many other passages throughout the Apostolic Scriptures confirm that obeying the commands of God is something that His people should joyfully perform, rather than find ways to avoid. The Apostle John tells us that obedience to God's commandments comes as a result of the deep love that we have for Him, and our faith—the trust and steadfast belief that we place in God—is what will help us overcome the obstacles of the world. Only through faith can those who are born again experience victory over the enemy. **Is it possible that one of the ways how someone will actually know he or she has been born from above is when the person joyfully desires to obey the Lord, rather than find ways to disobey Him?** Note that obeying God begins with *loving Him*. Is loving God too difficult a thing to do?

These are important questions for us to consider, as we once again turn to another season of our lives as the Fall Feasts come to a close. For those in the Messianic community, we once again recall the ancient paths as the new civil year commences. Thanks to the centuries of our Jewish brethren handling the oracles of God (Romans 3:2), we have been given some patterns for seeking God in a systematic manner. What should come to mind immediately, of course, is the opportunity to once again study the Torah on a one-year (or three-year) cycle. One can likewise look forward to each of the appointed times and other celebrations that are scheduled on the Hebrew calendar. If you are new to all of this, I am sure that you will discover that over the years as you are faithful and consistent to remember the things that the Lord requests of us, you will be blessed beyond belief and be more spiritually tuned to what He desires to accomplish in our individual and corporate lives.

In a few months, the Feast of Dedication or *Chanukah* will give each of us eight days to remember the mighty acts of the Macabbees, and to take this time to rededicate ourselves to the Lord. Following this at *Purim*, we remember the deliverance of the Jewish people from the evil Haman who tried to annihilate them. As Spring unfolds, the week of the Festival of Unleavened Bread commences with Passover *sedars* in remembrance of the deliverance of Ancient Israel from Egypt (and by extension our own per-

sonal slavery to sin [cf. Romans 6]). We also remember the Feast of First Fruits that is reminiscent of the resurrection and the hope that is within us. This is followed by fifty days of Counting the Omer to *Shavuot*, when we celebrate the early harvest with two leavened loaves representing the fullness of humanity. After the hot Summer months, we will again come full circle to the season we have just completed.

We have already seen some prophetic fulfillment in the Spring Feasts represented by the death, burial, and resurrection of Yeshua during Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread. And likewise, we have seen some prophetic fulfillment of *Shavuot* as the Holy Spirit was given to the Believers at this time. But we are still awaiting the broad fulfillment of the Fall Feasts when the great judgment and return of the Messiah will occur. This should give us great motivation to not only observe these commands, but also to continue to teach our children and others about their ultimate fulfillment at a definite point in the future. **Much can be learned about God's plan of salvation history by remembering the appointed times.**

While observing the appointed times is an extremely important part of our Messianic faith, I would also like to give you some additional exhortations so that your faith can both increase and progress to where the Lord wants you to be. I believe it is foundational for us to go through a disciplined study of the weekly Torah and Haftarah selections, but it has become clear to our ministry over the past year that this alone is *not sufficient* for Messianic Believers today. There is much in the Bible that we overlook.

I would encourage you to broaden your horizons this year. So much can be gleaned from taking a look at Biblical books such as: Joshua, Judges, and 1&2 Samuel as we see how the Israelites occupied the Promised Land, were formed as a nation, and interacted with their neighbors. We see the complicated history of Israel's monarchy in 1&2 Kings and 1&2 Chronicles, ultimately resulting in the division of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms and the exile. Books such as Esther, Ruth, Job, Lamentations, Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes speak volumes to the human condition in terms of wisdom and our need to rely upon God. Likewise, the Prophets call Israel to repentance and to return to the Lord—certainly something every human being on Earth needs to do.

Studying these texts will give you not only a wider Biblical perspective, but also will provide some key solutions on how to handle the complex religious and social issues that we face today, whether in the United States or elsewhere. Of course, complimenting all of this should be a consistent study of the Apostolic Scriptures in order to discover how the first Believers in Yeshua not only followed Him, but made a difference in their world as a direct result of their faith!

As a result of taking the time this coming year to not only follow God's calendar, but examine a variety of Scriptures from across all the Bible—

there is no doubt in my mind that your faith will be truly strengthened and enhanced. This greater faith will generate not only more obedience that will please our Heavenly Father, but will generate greater love for Him and for others. **For those of us who have faith for all seasons, it all comes down to whether or not we are being conformed to the image of the Messiah.** Does He not model the ultimate example of faith as He relinquished His will to that of His Father? Likewise, is not Yeshua the ultimate embodiment of the grace, mercy, and compassion that we should strive to have within us?

Let us never confuse faith and our desire to be obedient in order to please Him, lest we think that via our human action that we are somehow "righteous." While God expects each of us to live holy lives, it is because of our faith in Him that we are righteous – not what we do. Just listen to how Paul puts it as he describes the surpassing value of having faith in and knowing Messiah Yeshua:

"More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Messiah Yeshua my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Messiah, and may be found in Him, **not having a righteousness of my own** derived from *the Law*, but that which is **through faith in Messiah, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith**, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead" (Philippians 3:8-11).

I will pray to our Father that this year, we will all come to the point where knowing Him through all of His Word becomes a great passion of our lives, so that we can be transformed and empowered to do great things for His Kingdom. This can be done as we seek Him with all of our hearts, minds, souls, and strength. Let us have faith that is increased not only in just the coming year, but in *all the seasons of life* that lie ahead. As we see this accomplished, we can praise the Lord and give Him great glory for what He has done, is doing, and will do through us by the work of His Spirit!

We thank You, Father, that faith does indeed have everything to do with "it" – our salvation, our justification, our sanctification, and most importantly our eternal destination!

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ORDER NOW—BEAT THE RUSH!
MESSIANIC WINTER HOLIDAY HELPER

To help you and your household, we have included many articles from a variety of Messianic authors on how to deal with the Winter Holidays. We have included articles on the history of Chanukah, the non-Biblical practice of Christmas, Chanukah for the Two-Houses of Israel, insights on how to handle the Holidays with our family and friends, and a practical guide to observing Chanukah with your family.

\$10.00 plus shipping & handling



CELEBRATING CHANUKAH TODAY

How do we deal with our extended family and friends who do not understand why we are not celebrating Christmas like they are? Our family believes that the Winter holiday season is a wonderful time of year for Messianic Believers to reach out to family and friends by doing something that Messiah Yeshua did by celebrating *Chanukah*. How do we do this? Margaret McKee Huey discusses the difficult transition that many have had to undertake by no longer celebrating Christmas and commemorating *Chanukah*, and the testimony that we need to have toward others.

\$7.00 plus shipping & handling



THE CHRISTMAS CHALLENGE

What is the history of the holiday of Christmas? Is it Biblical? Why do Messianic Believers not celebrate Christmas? What should Messianic Believers do during the Winter holiday season? What attitude should we have toward our Christian friends and family who celebrate Christmas?

\$7.00 plus shipping & handling



**CHANUKAH FOR
THE TWO HOUSES OF ISRAEL**

Should non-Jewish Messianic Believers celebrate Chanukah? Even though not mandated in Scripture, what is the history behind Chanukah and what does it commemorate? How does Chanukah relate to the Two-House reunification of Judah and Ephraim and why should we celebrate it as Messianic Believers?

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