



OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

REACH TEACH ENCOURAGE DISCIPLE



MARCH 2008
THE SPIRIT OF HOPE



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STATEMENT OF BELIEF

Outreach Israel Ministries and TNN Online

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.

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

For a fuller Statement of Faith, consult the OIM website

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

Members of the Board:

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OIM is a 501(c)(3) non-profit
educational ministry

Mark Huey
director

Margaret McKee Huey
office manager

J.K. McKee
TNN Press

Jane McKee
youth ministries

Outreach Israel Ministries
1492 Regal Court
Kissimmee, FL 34744

Phone: (407) 933-2002
Fax: (407) 870-8986
Web: www.outreachisrael.net
www.tnnonline.net
E-mail: info@outreachisrael.net

OIM UPDATE

March 2008

In recent months, those of us who reside in the United States have been observing, or in some cases participating in, the quadrennial process where the nation's electorate selects presidential candidates for the two major political parties. This fascinating process, exacerbated this year by the addition of a blogosphere to complement the inundation of reports by various media outlets, is no doubt influencing just about every citizen—whether one wants to admit it or not. Our ministry household is analyzing these political machinations through a grid of the Holy Scriptures. As a result, this past February I was led to write a brief editorial that was posted on the McHuey Blog, entitled “The Complexity of Hope.” Still, the subject of “hope” continues to permeate through the airwaves and digital broadcasts, not unlike a virus seeking a host to infect.

To expand upon my earlier thoughts I have written this month's lead article entitled, “The Spirit of Hope,” which deals with the complex relationship between the concepts of hope, faith, and love. These are important ideas that anyone who believes in the Holy One of Israel needs to understand. How are they being “hijacked” in this current season of political debate, when Believers need to be placing their firm confidence not in men (or women), but in the God who created them?

This issue also includes our latest Health and Nutrition Update: “The Parable of the Sower.” This review relates to some of the remarkable parallels between spreading the word about God's Kingdom, and sharing insight about proper nutrition. Amazingly, we are experiencing similar results in both attempts on our part to help people with their spiritual *and* physical needs. I sincerely hope that in your quest to be fed spiritually, that you have the optimal health by which you can be effective for His service.

This past month, in our efforts to continue our worldwide ministry outreach, we have launched the **TNN Press Book Fund**. While our ministry is making a great deal of progress on many spiritual fronts, via the large amount of free teachings and materials we make available for you, this is one front where we have been lagging behind. If you have been blessed by Outreach Israel and desire to see a well-balanced and scholastic Messianic faith presented to others, **we need you to join us in this project**. We will begin by seeing that our most popular items such as *Hebraic Roots*, *Introduction to Things Messianic*, and the *Messianic Helper Series* are printed first, logically followed by other titles. If we have been a blessing to you, please be a blessing to us and to others by donating to this ongoing fund!

This March, we begin to look forward to the beginning of the Spring Feasts as *Purim* arrives, preparing us to celebrate Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread next month. If you have not already done so, and plan on joining with us in Orlando for Shavuot over June 13-15, please get your registrations in as soon as possible! We are expecting another wonderful turnout and reunion with many of

our friends and acquaintances from over the years. Before you know it, our seven-week Omer Count will begin and the days to June will pass far too quickly. Sign up now and get all of your reservations completed. **In the spirit of this month's lead article, we *hope* to see you all!**

Until the restoration of all things...

William Mark Huey



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THE SPIRIT OF HOPE

by Mark Huey

There is a wise, old rule of thumb which states that in respectful conversation it is impolite to talk about religion or politics, because you just might offend someone. But in our household of history, political science, and theology degrees and students—one can easily imagine how this is not necessarily followed. Due to the interconnectivity of human thought and emotion, motivated by religious views and/or political persuasions, the *nearly opposite* rule for discussion of serious matters is almost a prerequisite at the McHueys! Both taboo subjects actually add historical, psychological, and sociological contexts to what we often discuss and communicate, enlivening and enriching our conversations.

The topics of hope and faith have recently come to my attention, as we have all been observing the current political environment with the presidential primaries. Recently (18 February, 2008), I was prompted to write a short blog entry about what I labeled the “complexity of hope.” In my thoughts, I discussed how I was shocked by a number of young people, who professing a faith embodied by the Holy Scriptures, were instead being motivated to political action by what appears to be an inspiration that we can call the “spirit of hope.” From some personal observations, it appears that professing Believers in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are just putting their faith in Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) and His accomplished work on hold, in order to embrace an ephemeral “hope of change.” The more I thought about this apparent contradiction, the more I was inclined to take a look at faith and hope in the Biblical context in order to understand why this phenomenon is taking place.

I have read the Scriptures many times since being born from above in 1978. Throughout God’s Word I have seen words in English such as: faith, hope, belief, trust, affirm, and faithfulness. All of these convey some kind of idea that human beings have to place themselves in the hands of an Eternal Being, who ultimately knows what is best for them in their lives. While I could have conducted a word study on terms such as *aman* (אָמֵן), *emunah* (אֱמוּנָה), and *tiqvah* (תִּקְוָה); or *pisteuō* (πιστεύω), *pistis* (πίστις), and *elpis* (ἐλπίς)¹—I could find myself speculating on various verses of Scripture, rather than addressing the greater issue facing us: how do we as limited creatures relate to our Unlimited Creator during this time in world history?

Just what is it in which people are supposed to place their confidence? A simple answer could be that the covenant-keeping God of the Bible, who via His faithfulness to us, has given us words and promises in His Word that He is required—due to His perfect righteousness—to keep. The more I have searched the Scriptures, looking at words like faith and hope in all their variations, the more I have become convinced that our Creator has made it abundantly clear that faith in Him and hope in what He has promised are critical for us as His people.

¹ For a further discussion of this subject, consult the editorial “Have You Met My Friend, ‘Truth?’” by J.K. McKee in this issue.

Interestingly, in reviewing various Scriptures, another component that at times punctuated or complimented the actions of placing faith or hope in the promises of God, was found. The concept of loving both God and others seems to enhance the more thoughtful concepts of faith and/or hope in something intangible. It appears that while faith and hope in God are required, the actions of love seem to be more tangible and recognizable as His people accomplish or carry out various actions that depict the love (Heb. *ahavah*, אָהַבָּ; Grk. *agapē*, ἀγάπη) that the Father requires of His children.

Surveying various passages from Genesis to Revelation—that specifically mention faith and hope—I was pleasantly surprised that the component of *love* was often part of the message given through the various Biblical authors. While there are too many passages to list, I would like to offer you a sampling of them. In our lives we often find that terms like “faith” and “hope” are used to inspire us, yet we are often not familiar with what they mean in specific ways. In a critical text that actually points to the relationship God has with His chosen people, one is reminded of the admonition to demonstrate a love for Him by keeping His commandments:

“For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments” (Deuteronomy 7:6-9).

The Psalmist links having love for God with faithfulness, being obedient to Him, and having hope in Him:

“O love the LORD, all you His godly ones! The LORD preserves the faithful and fully recompenses the proud doer. Be strong and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in the LORD” (Psalm 31:23-24).

The Apostle Paul tells the Galatians how the return of Yeshua is our “hope of righteousness,” and how “faith working through love” is evidence of the Holy Spirit in us:

“For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness. For in Messiah Yeshua neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love” (Galatians 5:5-6).

The Apostle Paul tells the Thessalonians to “put on the breastplate of faith and love,” demonstrating their love by building up one another, which will lead to the harmony God desires among His children:

“But since we are of *the day*, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also

are doing. But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another” (1 Thessalonians 5:8-13).

“We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Yeshua the Messiah in the presence of our God and Father, knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you” (1 Thessalonians 1:2-4).

The Apostle Peter admonishes his audience how their faith and hope in God manifest themselves in the fervent love they demonstrate:

“For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart” (1 Peter 1:20-22).

We could review numerous passages that mention the terms: faith, hope, love—not to mention the many passages where these concepts are implied. Inevitably, though, one of the more familiar passages comes into view. In 1 Corinthians 13, the Apostle Paul describes the *agapē* love that his disunified and factitious Corinthian brethren are to see restored to themselves. Moving from childhood to adulthood, Paul reminds them of the maturing process they are struggling through:

“For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. **But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love**” (1 Corinthians 13:9-13).

Here, Paul’s frequently-quoted summary remark is: *meizōn de toutōn hē agapē* (μείζων δὲ τούτων ἡ ἀγάπη), “the greatest of these is love.” We discover that when one analyzes faith, hope, and love—that he concludes that the greatest of these is love. Is it possible that he comes to this conclusion because true love is **more observable** than faith or hope? When you read the list of ways that love can evidence itself in various tangible actions that can bless God’s people and the world, you just might understand Paul’s conclusion.

James the Just, brother of Yeshua, makes some very candid remarks when he compares faith to works. He states that faith without works is dead or completely useless. And, when you read through James 2, you get some very clear examples of what James considers “works” to primarily include. All of these works include loving one’s brethren, demonstrating to others that a person is concerned for the well-being of *all* the brothers and sisters in the assembly—most especially the poor:

“My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Yeshua the Mes-

siah with *an attitude* of personal favoritism. For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, 'You sit here in a good place,' and you say to the poor man, 'You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,' have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called? If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF,' you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin *and* are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one *point*, he has become guilty of all. For He who said, 'DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY,' also said, 'DO NOT COMMIT MURDER.' Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by *the* law of liberty. For judgment *will be* merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment. 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?" (James 2:1-20).

This is a wonderful section of Scripture because it describes where the rubber meets the road in terms of faith, hope, and love. It is insufficient to simply claim "love" for one's fellow Believers—or even one's fellow human beings—without doing something about it. How many people do we ever say "*shalom*" to as Messianics, yet do we expel any effort to see that such people have the peace and harmony and tranquility that the term embodies?

Lamentably, it appears that there are those in the current political arena, who are *usurping* the role of the Body of Messiah, by promising to deliver many of the things described by James to the underprivileged and poor. The comparison of the wealthy versus the poor, and how our society or government is handling both ends of the socio-economic spectrum, is excellent rhetoric for inspirational speeches. I believe that what we are witnessing with the "spirit of hope" resonates with those who lack discernment in their faith. They lack assemblies and congregations whereby some of their serious (material) needs can be met, and so instead they turn to political leaders. Many of the claims made by the various candidates are certainly striking a chord—that have all the elements of truth and cannot be denied as invalid—but these claims are not focused on the God of Creation and the mandate He has given to us. Rather, the state has replaced God,

as resources are not provided by the faith community, but by the government via legislation. How does this reflect on people who claim to know and serve the Lord? At the very least, it reflects on how not enough people are performing the “love actions” required by the Scriptures.

In pondering these conclusions, I asked myself why this is happening. I was forced to conclude that in all likelihood the problem is a lack of *disciplined* discipleship in the Body of the Messiah, not only here in the United States, but around the globe. Many are not desiring greater things of the Lord, or wanting to know how they can live the Bible in a more meaningful way. And among many of the people who seem to want more, too many seem to be more interested in the latest religious fad or teaching, which has a tendency to tickle ears rather than empower people for the mission of God. Submitting oneself to a regular regimen of teaching about the weightier matters of God’s Kingdom is just not as fun as being hyped or sensationalized by one’s “leaders.”

The early Pharisees placed a high emphasis on matters of righteousness and social justice, seeing themselves as a reforming movement that could make a difference. Yet, by the time of Yeshua, He found Himself having to directly confront the religious leaders for their hypocrisy, as their positions had become more important to them than the work of the Kingdom:

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, **and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.** You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, ‘If we had been *living* in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in *shedding* the blood of the prophets.’ So you testify against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of *the guilt* of your fathers” (Matthew 23:23-32).

As you read these memorable words, you just might ask yourself where you are as a disciple and follower of the Holy One of Israel. Are there actions that you have forgotten to perform? How are you demonstrating that you truly have faith and hope in something beyond yourself? Are you being disciplined? Are you discipling anyone? How is the Holy Spirit working through you? These are thought-provoking questions that we can each individually take to heart. I pray we will seriously consider them in a political season where “hope” will be presented as a mantra for change, and where we as the *ekklēsia* can accomplish the mandate of being a blessing that God has given us. Moses told the Ancient Israelites that their obedience to God’s Instruction would make them the awe of the

surrounding nations:

“So keep and do *them*, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the LORD our God whenever we call on Him?” (Deuteronomy 4:6-7).

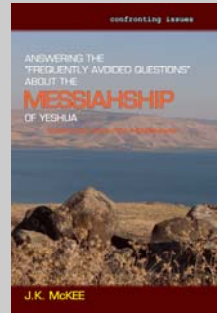
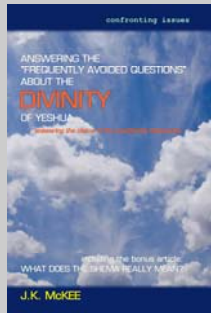
Do people look to us for great wisdom and insight? Do people look to us for true hope? Let us never forget that our hope is in Yeshua the Messiah *in us*—“the hope of glory”:

“[T]he mystery which has been hidden from the *past* ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, **which is Messiah in you, the hope of glory**. We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Messiah. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me” (Colossians 1:26-29).

As God’s people, we should not only have the desire, but the inspiration via His Spirit in us, to help others come to saving faith and walk in His ways. When we can accomplish this and fulfill the mission that He has assigned to us, people will not look to governmental leaders and a false “spirit of hope” masquerading with supposed answers and empty promises. **Instead, the true Spirit of Hope inside of each of us can transform people and save them from their sins!** For indeed, it is only in Yeshua the Messiah that America—and all the world—can be redeemed. To Him be all the glory, for He alone is worthy to be worshipped! And, may we offer *all the hope* of a relationship with Him.

COMING THIS SPRING FROM TNN PRESS

TNN Press’ Confronting Issues booklet series directly tackles the theological and ideological phenomenon that often divide and disrupt today’s Messianic movement. Do not let the size of these booklets fool you; each of them packs a heavy theological punch, challenging error in our communities and instigating positive spiritual change. This booklet series has been produced to offer the “other side” of many of the issues that have created spiritual instability over the past several years.



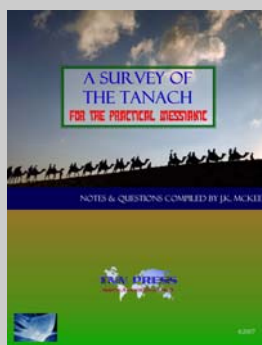
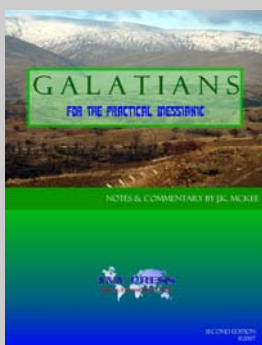
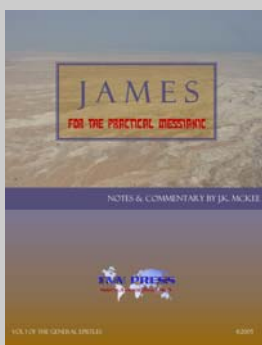
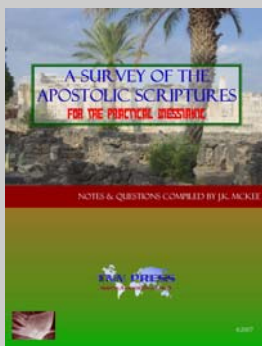
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HAVE YOU MET

my friend “Truth”?

by J.K. McKee

In today’s Messianic world, we see a great deal of discussion about a concept called truth, or perhaps clarified, “Truth” with a capital T. But what this is, what it means, and how it impacts a person’s life and relationship with God is often defined in various ways. As certain people search to find “the Truth”—as they call it—what are they specifically searching for? What is it that people seek?

When I think of “truth,” I cannot help but be reminded of Yeshua’s words, “If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (John 8:31-32). The truth of God is something that His followers are to know, and it will make them free. It will make people free from the power of sin, free from the lures of the Adversary, and free to fulfill the calling and mission that He has assigned to each of us. The truth of the gospel is intended to redeem people from the consequences of sin, and into a new relationship with God via His Son. The truth of God’s Word is to empower us for His service in the world.

Yeshua further says, “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come” (John 16:13). The Holy Spirit is to guide all of God’s people into the truth, as the Spirit is to give a born again Believer discernment to distinguish between what is of Him and what is not of Him. The relationship between salvation and “truth” is undeniable from any cursory reading of the Apostolic Scriptures. Paul writes Timothy that God “desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 2:3, ESV).

The concept of “truth,” however, is not just seen in the “New Testament.” Indeed, the underlying vocabulary of our Scriptures are laced with concepts that are all connected to “truth.” Genesis 15:6, describing the Patriarch Abraham, is one of the most important verses in all of the Bible. We are told that Abraham “believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.” The Hebrew verb rendered as either “believed” or “trusted” is *aman* (אָמַן), appearing in the Qal stem (simple action, active voice), the “basic mng. to be firm, trustworthy, safe” (*CHALOT*).¹

The verb *aman* is an important term used in the Hebrew Scriptures, because it is related to a variety of other key terms seen in the Tanach, including: *omen* (אָמַן), “faithfulness,” *emun* (אֱמוּנָה), “trusting, faithfulness,” *emnunah* (אֱמוּנָה), “firmness, steadfastness, fidelity,” *emet* (אֱמֶת), “firmness, faithfulness, truth,” and the all important *amein* (אָמֵן), “verily, truly” (*BDB*).² While the meaning of the

¹ William L. Holladay, ed., *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden, the Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1988), 20.

² Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 53ff, 54.

verb *aman* can change slightly among the different verb stems, “The basic root idea is firmness or certainty” (*TWOT*).³ When Abraham “believed God” it was not just a matter of acknowledging His existence; Abraham had to have a firm confidence in the promises made to him by God and trust that God was going to see him through no matter what. This is why Paul reminds the Galatians, “Look at Abraham: he put his faith in God, and that faith was counted to him as righteousness” (Galatians 3:6, NEB).

In the Hebrew Scriptures, the English concepts of belief, faith, and trust are all uniquely tied together. The Psalmist declares, “O LORD, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill? He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, and speaks truth [*emet*] in his heart” (Psalm 15:1-2). Only the one who can have firm trust in the Lord is he who himself “acknowledges the truth” (NJPS)—and this truth is only that which comes from the Creator. This truth is what can be relied upon, firmly believed, and confided in during life’s arduous journey. As Psalm 43:3 should remind us, “O send out Your light and Your truth [*emet*], let them lead me; let them bring me to Your holy hill and to Your dwelling places.”

The Greek Scriptures offer us a little more variance than the Hebrew Scriptures when it relates to God’s “truth,” but *nothing* so significant that the underlying idea of firm confidence is skewed. In fact, *more dimensions* are added. A critical verse that should guide us is Romans 10:9, where Paul says “if you confess with your mouth Yeshua as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” The Greek verb commonly rendered as “believe” (“trust” in CJB) is *pisteuō* (πιστεύω), which “denotes reliance, trust, and belief.” Important related terms used throughout the Greek Apostolic Scriptures (and also the Septuagint) include: *pistis* (πίστις), “‘trust’ or ‘faith,’” and *pistos* (πιστός), “‘faithful’ or ‘trusting’” (*TDNT*).⁴ Both Paul (Galatians 3:6; Romans 4:3) and James (3:23) use the verb *pisteuō* to describe the “belief” or faith of Abraham. But it is not just enough to “believe” in something; one must also “*be convinced of someth.*” (*BDAG*).⁵

The main term used in the Greek Scriptures (both LXX and NT) for “truth,” however, is *alētheia* (ἀλήθεια), which *BDAG* primarily defines as “the quality of being in accord with what is true, **truthfulness, dependability, uprightness** in thought.” A third, and interesting definition, which *BDAG* also provides is “an actual event or state, **reality.**”⁶ What this seems to communicate is that when the “truth” is talked about in the Gospels and Epistles, *not just* are the ideas of confidence and reliability communicated, but also something that is *factual*. *TDNT* makes the important point, “It denotes a reality that is firm, solid, binding, and hence true. With reference to persons it characterizes their action, speech, or thought, and suggests integrity.”⁷ And of course, all of us believe that

³ Jack B. Scott, “**אמן**,” in R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 1:51.

⁴ R. Bultmann, “*pistis*,” in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, abridged (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 853.

⁵ 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), 816.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 42.

what comes from God and the teachings of our Messiah Yeshua is of a Divine character that is firm in integrity.

What does this all mean for us as Messianic Believers—especially those who believe that God is restoring a Torah foundation to His people? All of us have certainly heard or talked a great deal about “the Truth” at some point or another. But I would point out that in many cases this “Truth” is not necessarily that of which the Scriptures speak. The Bible encourages us to believe, have faith, and trust in the One who is to guide us into His perfect plan. The truth which the Bible admonishes us to have is that which comes from God and is a clear demonstration of His perfect character. It can be relied upon, and we can confide in that truth when life’s circumstances demand that we turn to Him. God’s truth composes those principles whereby we can be a blessed people and live according to His will.

In contrast, what we see in various sectors when “the Truth” is talked about is often vague. Many people discuss that they are on a quest for “Truth,” but what this is sometimes is not very clear. Are people searching for something that can be believed and depended upon? Are people searching for those principles that can guide them through perilous times? Or, are they looking for something else?

Sometimes “the Truth” with a capital T that is talked about in the Messianic world is something different than what the Bible calls us to. This “Truth” is viewed as an antithesis to “lies.” Certainly, while we do live in a world of both *truth and lies*—what constitutes a *lie* must also be considered before we can describe a concept as such. There are many things that indeed are lies. But then there are many things that are probably *hastily classified* as lies, or even as half-truths, when considered more clearly are often *incomplete ideas lacking information*. When Messianic Believers have had to reevaluate common Christian concepts of the Law of Moses, in too many instances what are classified as “lies” are often those incomplete ideas lacking information. We are blessed to have access to data that Christians two to three hundred years ago did not have. Yet, many of these departed saints did indeed have the truth of the gospel, and of holy living *correct*. Many of their teachings up to this day are reliable and dependable—**just as the terms for belief, faith, and truth all embody.**

I would urge some extreme caution in the days ahead—especially as our Messianic theology matures and branches out—concerning how you use the term “truth.” The truth as defined in the Scriptures is something that is dependable and factual, aiding someone in his or her relationship with God. Otherwise, is “the Truth” we commonly hear and talk about just a person or a friend whom we desire to meet? If we capitalize this term, what are we trying to communicate? *Just what point are we trying to make?* Should we not be concerned with the information that stands behind the truth, rather than forcing this concept? Is it not the *uprightness of reality* embodied by this word that is to convince others—not the word itself?

Of course, **all of us** at one point or another have made the error of capitalizing the word “truth.” We have gone along with a trend, neither thinking it

⁷ G. Quell, “*alētheia*,” in *TDNT*, 38.

through nor considering what we were communicating. We thought it was our “duty” to make a point. *But does it really make a point?* If our understanding of “truth” is not substantiated via reliable data—and most importantly founded in the steadfast character of the God whom we serve—then at most our “Truth” is just a person whom we may never meet. I pray that this is not the case. I hope that the truth we can present as Messianics is more than just capitalizing a word *that needs to remain uncapitalized*. I hope that this truth is something that can guide people to a better relationship with the Lord via obedience, and will enable people to have a firm belief, faith, and indeed trust in Him!

Purim: Do you think that Messianic Believers should celebrate Purim?

There are some in the independent Messianic community (as opposed to Messianic Judaism), who do not believe it is necessary to observe Purim. *Purim* is not listed among the appointed times of Leviticus 23, because the events that it commemorates occurred after the giving of the Written Torah to Moses on Mount Sinai. *Purim* commemorates the events of the Book of Esther, where the Jews are threatened with annihilation at the hands of the evil Haman. Via the sovereignty of God, Esther is in the right place at the right time to thwart his evil plans.

While not one of the Biblical *moedim* in Leviticus 23, the Book of Esther does record that the commemoration of these events was to be honored by the Jews for centuries to come, and never to be forgotten:

“For Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the adversary of all the Jews, had schemed against the Jews to destroy them and had cast Pur, that is the lot, to disturb them and destroy them. But when it came to the king’s attention, he commanded by letter that his wicked scheme which he had devised against the Jews, should return on his own head and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows. Therefore they called these days Purim after the name of Pur [lot]. And because of the instructions in this letter, both what they had seen in this regard and what had happened to them, the Jews established and made a custom for themselves and for their descendants and for all those who allied themselves with them, so that they would not fail to celebrate these two days according to their regulation and according to their appointed time annually. So these days were to be remembered and celebrated throughout every generation, every family, every province and every city; and these days of Purim were not to fail from among the Jews, or their memory fade from their descendants” (Esther 9:24-28).

As Believers, we have the responsibility to remember these events as well, because if the Jewish people had been eliminated, then there would have been no people of Israel and thus no Messiah. We should always be rejoicing in the triumphs of God’s people over evil, and *Purim* is definitely an appropriate time for us to remember the mighty deeds that He has performed. It is also an excellent time for us to stand up to the evils of anti-Semitism, as the spirit of Haman has never left us, embodying itself in anyone who wants to destroy the Jewish people.

Learn more about the festival of Purim in the Messianic Spring Holiday Helper, available from TNN Press!



THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

March 2008 Health Update

by Mark and Margaret Huey

Most of you are familiar with Yeshua's parable of the sower, and the basic principle that He teaches from it. Our Messiah teaches that different people will hear the Word of God and have various reactions to it. For recollection purposes, please read the following:

“Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone **hears the word of the kingdom** and does not understand it, the evil *one* comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no *firm* root in himself, but is *only* temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away. And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. **And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.**’ Yeshua presented another parable to them, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, “Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?” And he said to them, “An enemy has done this!” The slaves said to him, “Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?” But he said, “No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, ‘First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.’”’ (Matthew 13:18-30).

In a parallel sort of way, receiving information about health and nutrition is similar to hearing about the good news of God's Kingdom. Since last year, we have been actively sharing with people about the benefits of changing their eating habits and taking supplements, and we have actually had some of the exact responses listed in this parable! Some of our advice has fallen on rocky soil without the ability to properly root itself, thus withering when questions arise. Some has fallen among the thorns, as the worries of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth (or lack thereof) chokes any potential growth, resulting in barrenness. On the other hand, some have listened to our counsel and have begun to receive the health benefits that can be acquired by changing one's eating habits and taking the supplements we are recommending—bearing fruit on various levels mentioned above.

The testimonies of people who have been greatly helped continue to be a blessing to hear and share with you! We have many testimonies of people **getting**

off their prescription drugs as their bodies have adjusted to being properly fed vitamins and minerals so that they can operate the way God designed them to function. Blood pressure issues have been helped, weight loss or weight gain (for those who needed it) have been realized, hormonal imbalances have been greatly helped, energy levels have greatly improved, auto-immune issues have been addressed and helped, etc.

Margaret's own testimony, of getting off pain medication for her joint pains, has been a tremendous relief to her. In fact, she has found out that the ibuprofen medication she was taking last year actually was working against her immune system. She was probably on her way to an auto-immune issue of her own, if she had not started changing the way she was eating and supplementing herself. It is amazing to watch the seed being cast with the above compliment of results! We have a supplement product that you can try that has a 180 day (6 month) money-back guarantee. Call us for the details.

If you have not done so already, we would like to refer you to some good seed to cast on your soil through the video presentation entitled, "Outside the Box: Understanding Glyconutrients" by Jeff Allen, accessible online at the following URL:

<http://www.virtualinformationpack.com/vip/vip.asp?InvitationCode=286226225247>

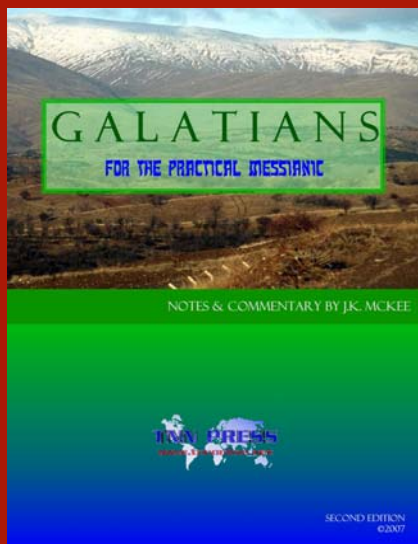
At the end of our lives, we are all going to be the sum total of all the choices we have made. Perhaps it is your time to make a choice!

To health, life, and wholeness,
Mark and Margaret

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**We are also available to discuss your
specific health needs.**

A new commentary available from TNN Press:
GALATIANS
FOR THE PRACTICAL MESSIANIC



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Paul's letter as he rebukes the Galatians for errors that have crept into their congregations. Engaging with contemporary Christian scholarship on Galatians, critical questions regarding common conclusions of Paul's words are asked. Are Paul and Yeshua truly at odds when it comes to the Torah? Were the Jerusalem leaders and Paul at constant odds with one another? How does Paul's progressive Pharisaism of the Diaspora compare to the more conservative Pharisaism of Jerusalem? What were the spiritual dynamics present in Galatia? What does the term "works of law" really mean? These are only a few of the questions that are considered. Likewise, current proposals from the New Perspective of Paul in theological studies are also analyzed.

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Paul's Epistle to the Galatians is easily the most difficult to understand text for Messianic Believers today. Galatians has been historically interpreted by Christianity as delivering Believers a choice between God's Law and God's grace. Those who choose any obedience to the Law, according to this view of Paul, are unfaithful to the Messiah and the saving power of the gospel. Supposedly, Paul was desperately concerned for anyone who was trying to keep the Torah of Moses. Consequently, Galatians is a frequently-quoted text to today's Messianic Believers, most of whom are trying to live a life of holiness by obeying God's Torah in accordance with the example of obedience modeled to us by Yeshua.

In the commentary *Galatians for the Practical Messianic*, TNN Online editor J.K. McKee takes a direct look at the issues of



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