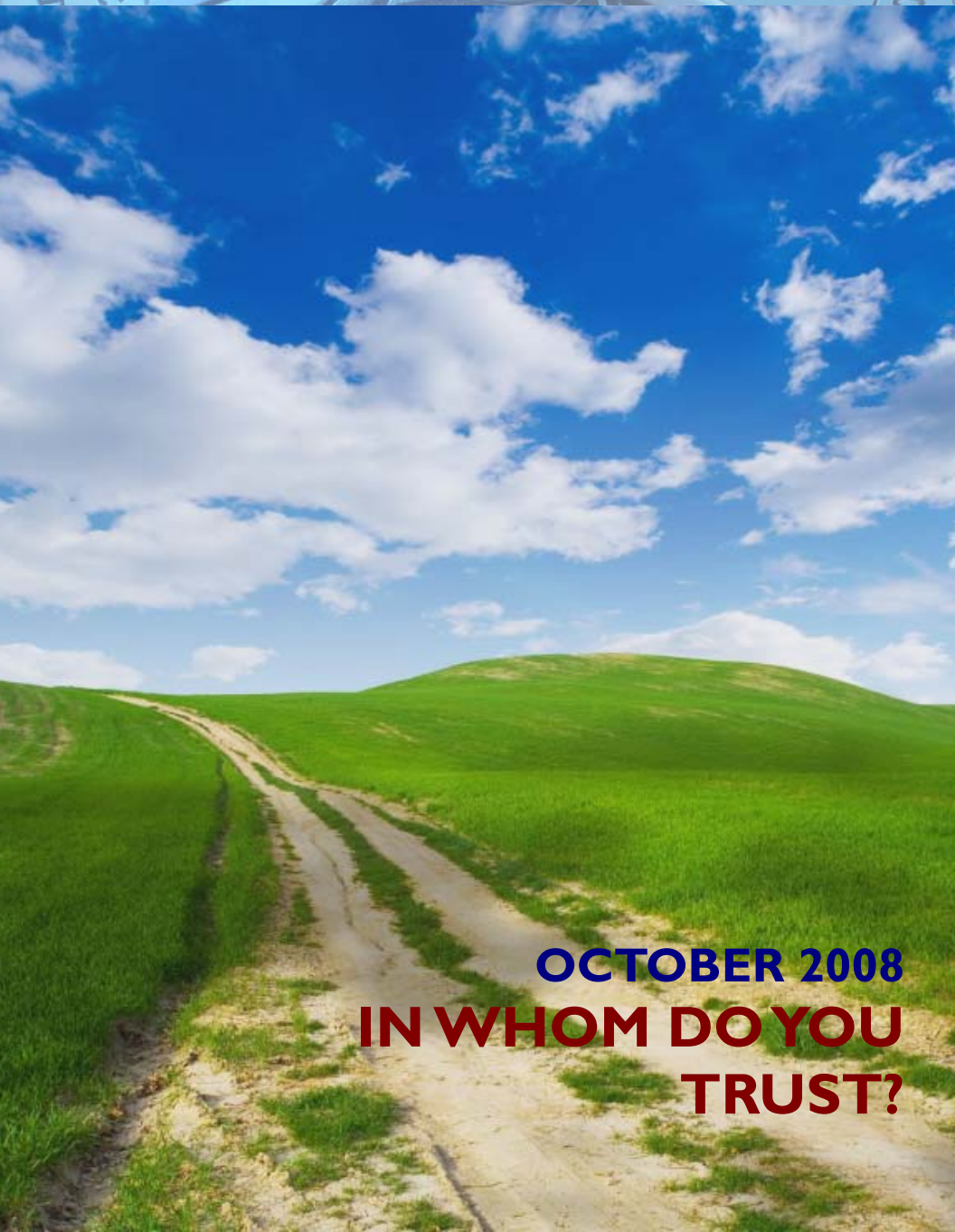




OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

REACH TEACH ENCOURAGE DISCIPLE



OCTOBER 2008
IN WHOM DO YOU
TRUST?



OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

REACH TEACH ENCOURAGE DISCIPLE

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

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OIM UPDATE

October 2008

According to Leviticus 23:24-44, the month of Tishri is one of the most active months of commemoration for those who follow and worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. After nearly four long, hot Summer months since the Spring celebration of *Shavuot*, the Fall appointments begin by uniquely announcing their arrival and culminating with an eight-day autumn harvest festival. On the tenth of the month, the most solemn day of the year is commemorated as Israel humbles itself before the Lord, thanking Him for the previous year of sustenance and seeking another year of His covering.

Once again for this Fall, we have faithfully been sending out a variety of teachings on *Yom Teruah/Rosh HaShanah*, the Ten Days of Awe, *Yom Kippur*, and *Sukkot*. We have been offering a series of distinct teachings and prayers that are designed to stimulate and focus you during this special time of the year. One of those prayers is included in this issue of OIM News, along with a teaching entitled “The Message of Joel.” The feedback we have received has been very encouraging, indicating to us that many of you are taking these exhortations to heart and are desiring the same things that we are.

This month, due to the uncertainty of the upcoming election here in the United States and present upheaval in the global economy, the subject of deciding *in whom we are to place our trust* came to my mind. This seasonal time of self-reflection and returning to our Creator with thanksgiving contributed to a significant increase in time I spent in praying and fasting. The lead article entitled, “**In Whom Do We Trust?**” is a succinct reminder that in order to trust the Creator God, we first have to know Him. This is one of the primary reasons that our ministry has always recommended that people examine the weekly Torah portion to some degree.

However, it is also immensely important that the Prophets, the Histories, the Writings, and the Apostolic Scriptures—where we find the fuller unveiling of God’s plan for the ages and the specific revelation about our Messiah Yeshua—also be examined for our spiritual growth. This is something that has been lacking in much of the Messianic community for a number of years. **Yeshua the Messiah must be at the very center of our beings for us to be effective servants for the Lord!** The Apostle Paul, an ardent student of the Torah and the Tanakh, and whose gospel preaching was based in these Scriptures (Romans 1:1-3), encourages one and all to get to know the Messiah Yeshua above everything else:

“For we are the *true* circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Messiah Yeshua and put no confidence in the flesh, although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the assembly; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have

counted as loss for the sake of Messiah. **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 3:3-11).

All human achievements, be they Paul's Rabbinical credentials or the military exploits of the Roman Philippians, are indeed meaningless in view of what Yeshua has done for us!

Needless to say, as we take time this month to return to our Heavenly Father in prayer and supplication—especially on the Day of Atonement—let us all be thankful for the atoning work of the Messiah Yeshua. Let us entreat our Father that more will call upon Him for the salvation that He has provided in His Son!

Finally, in our consistent desire to encourage everyone to maintain their health through preventative solutions, we have included an article that offers a short list of serious medical symptoms for everyone to consider. Once again, if we can be of help to you with your nutrition questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

L'shanah Tova and Chag Sameach!

NOW AVAILABLE FROM TNN PRESS!

How many of you have been bombarded with the idea that "the End" is certainly close, because of all the "unusual" geological and meteorological activities that seem to be occurring at a rate never seen before? How many of you have been told certain things about all of the earthquakes, volcanoes, tsunamis, comets, and even blood red moons that are heralding certain doom?



It is said of all the scientists that it is the geologist who is the best suited to view the Earth in its entirety. This means that he or she will understand how this dynamic Earth on which we live is connected to the geological, climatological, and astronomical events we see all around us on the ground and in the sky, and help others understand. God has created an amazing place on which to place His Creation!

Margaret McKee Huey of Outreach Israel Ministries, a geologist, tackles some of the important signs of the End that are seen in the Holy Scriptures. This teaching, *Looking at the Signs of the Times*, addresses important end-time phenomenon from a scientifically minded perspective.

IN WHOM DO WE TRUST?

by Mark Huey

The commemoration of the Fall appointed times reminds the Messianic community of faith that another year has passed on the calendar. Once again, as the *shofar* sounds to inaugurate the month of Tishri on *Yom Teruah* or Day of Blowing, one should be reminded of the solemn nature of this season. For the next ten days, culminating in the *Yom Kippur* or Day of Atonement remembrance, a degree of reflection and *teshuvah* or return descends upon those sincerely seeking the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. By the middle of the month, as the season turns somewhat more festive due to the nature of the ingathering associated with the autumn harvest, there still remains a need to recognize just why we are celebrating. This particular year, as economic and political distractions compete for our attention, it is especially important to once again turn to our Creator and be reminded of the One in whom we place our trust.

Let's be honest with each other: Times are difficult as people are attempting to get a grasp on how to plan their lives for the days, weeks, months, and years to come. If perchance, you chose to make some New Year resolutions tied to this year's *Rosh HaShanah*, you would be hard pressed because of all of the uncertainty in the air. Obviously, an American election that can go in either direction is looming on the horizon, holding everyone hostage with the gyrations set in motion by increasingly shrinking news cycles. Additionally, the possibility of unforeseen gaffes by politicians, coupled with statements (whether true or false) emanating from a blogosphere or YouTube—that for all practical purposes did not exist in previous years—can turn the electorate on a dime. Economically speaking, everyone on the planet is being affected by the actions of those sequestered in ivory towers of financial capitals, or cloistered in meeting rooms legislating obligations that citizens will be responsible to pay.

How ironic is it that the current recognized motto of the United States of America is “In God We Trust”—when in fact, **the empirical evidence suggests that many are either trusting in their financial resources or the largesse of the government for their personal security?** While those who worked to change the original secular Latin motto attached to the Great Seal, *E Pluribus Unum*, meaning “one from many” or “one from many parts,” may have had pure motives, one could conclude that their motivations were not so pure. During the Civil War when it first appeared on Union coins, the Federal government was trying to convince the citizens of the North that God was on their side. During the Cold War when it was legally adopted as the official motto, Congress made the clear distinction that capitalism, democratic principles, and free enterprise were godly—as opposed to the atheistic, state-controlled economic approach of communism practiced by the Soviet Union. But today as the American state gets larger, and as people are swayed against believing in a Supreme Being, does it really matter any more? Today, you might ask yourself this simple question: *In whom or in what do I really place my trust?*

For even the casual observer during these tumultuous times, it is very clear

that when the United States is challenged with political uncertainty or economic devastation, those in positions of authority and leadership can do nothing more than utter the almost obligatory, somewhat politically correct valediction, in their remarks of “May God bless America” or “God bless you.” Do Americans have to have something as terrible as a physical attack on their country, killing nearly three thousand as on 9/11, to have the president or Congress declare a day of prayer? Does it ever take such catastrophes for our brothers and sisters in the third world to be brought to their knees? Should we not be in prayer every day, entreating God for His mercy and favor?

If the American people as a whole really trusted in the God of the Bible, we would acknowledge Him at every juncture. We would call upon Him for guidance and mercy with much greater regularity, *especially* when crisis looms. But the problem is that the great majority of Americans—and for that matter, the great majority of humanity—does not truly know the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They may acknowledge His existence to some degree, but that is different from *knowing Him*. Consequently, this lack of knowledge is one of the principal reasons why year after year it is critical that His people—who truly *know* the Holy One of Israel—**stand in the gap interceding for not just those in America, but for the entire world!**

Around 3,300 years ago the Ancient Israelites, as they were being delivered from the clutches of the Egyptian Empire, were chosen out of the nations to be God’s own possession among the peoples. They were called to be a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation before the rest of humanity. How often do we need to be reminded of this original call upon God’s people?

“Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel” (Exodus 19:5-6).

The Lord was informing these former Egyptian slaves that they had some serious responsibilities imparted to them as representatives on Earth before the other nations. The requirements placed upon Ancient Israel to receive this elevated position among the nations are very clear, and they are repeated multiple times not only by Moses in the Torah—but by the Prophets, Psalmists, historians, and most importantly the Apostles. As Peter writes to his audience in the First Century,

“[Y]ou also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Yeshua the Messiah...But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A **royal PRIESTHOOD**, A **HOLY NATION**, A **PEOPLE FOR God’s OWN POSSESSION**, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:5, 9).

In the call upon Israel in Exodus, God tells His people to **obey His voice and keep His covenant**. When you consider this call upon Israel, take important note that what God expects His people to “obey” is also what they “hear.” The Hebrew term *shema* (שָׁמַע) is used in Exodus 19:5, and frequently assumes not just a *hearing* aspect, but also a *doing* aspect.¹ It is used 1,050 times in the Hebrew Ta-

nakh. We see that in order to obey the Word of God, one has to first hear it—but once it is heard, it is to be obeyed without any quarrels or disputation.

Nearly forty years later on the banks of the Jordan River, as Moses prepares the Ancient Israelites to enter into the Promised Land, the *Shema*—what has often been labeled the watchword of our faith—was declared. Not only was Israel to hear the words of God, but they are commanded to obey what is being sown continually into their hearts through consistent repetition. As you read these familiar words, consider how essential they are to keep God's people focused on their role as His priests and servants down through the ages:

“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. **You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.** You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

In these critical words, not only is the primacy of God for Israel declared, but the people are commanded to love the Lord with all of their hearts, souls, and might—with all of their very beings. Additionally, the words of God are to be upon one's heart continually by diligently and frequently, as the text suggests, teaching them to the future generations at every given opportunity. When sitting in your house, when walking by the way, or when your children arise or go to sleep—one should be taking every opportunity to point out God's ways so that the next generation will have a similar love and reverence for the Almighty. Instruction should be so all-encompassing that a person should be reminded of it whenever his hand is put to a task, or his mind is considering how to deal with every-day circumstances. This is a way to insure that God's people essentially filter their thoughts, decisions, choices, and actions through a grid composed of His Word. Even the physical reminder of having the words of God written on the doorposts of your home, the gates of your property or cities, is by its design a constant reminder that God's people are to keep their faith and trust in Him.

When this instruction is followed, every generation will be responsible to not only know the Lord, but they will be required to teach the next generation about Him and His ways. **How is one going to not only know the Lord, but also be able to place trust in Him, unless a person truly *knows* Him and how He operates with and through His people?** For the Jewish people down through the centuries, this has meant a systematic study of the Torah every week. Similarly, Protestant Christians have also encouraged regular readings and study of the Scriptures in one's family. What are we to do as Messianics, inheriting both of these distinct spiritual heritages?

Obviously, learning about our Heavenly Father through an ardent and consistent study of His Word is going to be far more rewarding and life changing—than

¹ Consult Hermann J. Austel, “שְׁמָעַי,” 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), 2:938-939.

simply placing a motto like “In God We Trust” on currency or marble and granite buildings. Clearly, adding a curt reference at the end of a speech or conversation that beseeches God’s blessings, especially if knowledge of the One True God is minimal or casual, is nothing more than a trite cliché.

Understanding this, can you begin to grasp how essential it is for each generation to *now* participate in the Fall feasts of the Lord wholeheartedly? **Can you recognize how each year you are modeling for your children and grandchildren your willingness to obey the commands of the Almighty as part of the priesthood of Believers?** As the appointed times are celebrated throughout the year, the children of God are not only taking the time to study the Word and getting to know the Holy One from the repetitious study of the actions of our spiritual forefathers, but in so doing, each of us is learning to explicitly trust in Him. **Our actions of obedience are hopefully speaking much louder than our words!**

Eventually, over the years of continually following His ways and obeying His commandments, you will more specifically discover your role as a priestly intermediary between God and your fellow man. You will learn in that capacity that you have the responsibility to intercede for your family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, nation, and for that matter, the whole unbelieving world. **Recognize that Believers who actually celebrate the feasts are indeed a remnant among the six billion people who inhabit the Earth.** While not knowing precisely how many people are obeying these commands, let us just estimate that every obedient Believer can intercede for any where between 500 and 1,000 souls currently living on the Earth. Take a moment and consider how during this season of reflection and commemoration, you can implore the Almighty for those specifically in your milieu, or even for those beyond your immediate environment. Remember, God specifically called Israel to be a light unto the nations:

“Thus says God the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and its offspring, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it, **I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, and I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon and those who dwell in darkness from the prison**” (Isaiah 42:5-7; cf. Luke 2:32; Acts 13:47; 26:23).

Consider it a privilege to be called into the Lord’s kingdom of priests. But beyond just the blessing, ***consider it your responsibility to pray for those you encounter.*** Recognize that you are God’s representative to a lost world. Understand that those you come in contact with on a regular basis are seeking answers to the many life questions that arise, especially given the world’s current predicaments. Be open and available with a declaration of the hope that is within you, as exemplified by the Apostle Paul as he encourages the saints in Colossae:

“Of *this [assembly]* I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the *preaching* of the word of God, *that is*, the 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, admon-

ishing 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 1:25-29).

Finally, here are a few thoughts from David the Psalmist, who not only knew the Holy One, but in his many accolations of praise gives us many examples of how important it is to trust in the Lord:

"My soul, wait in silence for God only, for my hope is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be shaken. On God my salvation and my glory *rest*; the rock of my strength, my refuge is in God. **Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah**" (Psalm 62:5-8).

Enjoy this Fall season with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength! Let God use you in the days, weeks, months, and years to come! After all, while these times might seem difficult, we know that He is perhaps preparing us and/or our progeny for even tougher times in the future. *The world is not getting any less complicated. In the future, it will be imperative that in all things that you place your total trust and confidence in "our great God and Savior, Messiah Yeshua" (Titus 2:13)!*

So get to know Him and His ways while there is still time, so you will trust Him in all that you do!

Until the restoration of all things...

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THE MESSAGE OF JOEL

by J.K. McKee

Joel is one of the most important Prophets of the Tanach, not only being significant for what one understands regarding the Day of the LORD or *Yom ADONAI*, but also for what one expects in the Last Days regarding the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon God's people. Perhaps because of its shortness, being only three chapters, Messianics today really do not focus a great deal of attention to Joel and his message(s) for us. In too many cases, our encounters with Joel are with a quote here or a quote there, possibly only in a song we might sing, with us not understanding a larger context of his prophecies. As we enter into a time when the Prophets are restored to a position of prominence in our Messianic Bible reading and theological engagement, the Prophet Joel indeed has some great treasures to deliver to us.

One of the difficulties that does exist with interpreting the Book of Joel is that unlike some of the other prophetic books, which often mention contemporary events or perhaps even explicitly state the dates when various prophecies are delivered, Joel gives us no direct clues as to its composition. Everything we assume about the backdrop of Joel's prophecies has to be guessed. We know that Joel was the "son of Pethuel" (1:1),¹ and that he does have a message focused around Judah and Jerusalem (2:32; 3:1, 6, 8, 16-20). Some believe he was somehow associated with the Temple priesthood. But did Joel prophesy before or after the dispersion of the Northern Kingdom? Some believe that Joel is post-exilic. *This continues to remain a mystery and debate for many.* The Book of Joel is placed second after the Twelve Prophets in the Jewish book order of the Tanach,² but the Greek Septuagint places it fourth after the Book of Micah,³ possibly giving us a hint as to when Joel prophesied. It is probably safe to say that Joel is pre-exilic and that he prophesied sometime in the Seventh or Sixth Centuries B.C.E., but conservatives are not entirely agreed. Our appeal as interpreters is ultimately to the text and to what Joel says, regardless of when the Lord spoke through him.⁴

The Book of Joel does not exactly begin on the most positive note. He urges the elders and those who live in the Land of Israel (1:2), with the instruction to tell their children (1:3), "What the locust swam has left the great locusts have eaten; what the great locusts have left the young locusts have eaten; what the young locusts have left other locusts have eaten" (1:4). This description of locusts is not necessarily to an ecological plague, but instead the drunkards (1:5) are told,

¹ Rendered in the Greek Septuagint as "the son of Bathuel" (LXE).

² Rudolph Kittel, et. al., *Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1977), pp 1009-1015; Aron Dotan, ed., *Biblia Hebraica Leningradensis* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001), pp 813-817.

³ Alfred Rahlfs, ed., *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979), 2:519-524.

⁴ For a further discussion, consult "The Date of the Book of Joel," in Duane A. Garrett, ed., et. al., *NIV Archaeological Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 1433.

“A nation has invaded my land, powerful and without number; it has the teeth of a lion, the fangs of a lioness. It has laid waste my vines and ruined my fig trees. It has stripped off their bark and thrown it away, leaving their branches white” (1:6-7). A foreign invader has come to Israel and has left a distinct mark of destruction in its path.

The Prophet Joel says to “Mourn like a virgin in sackcloth grieving for the husband of her youth” (1:8). The offerings at the House of the Lord will be cut off with the priests mourning (1:9), and the fields and their produce will be dried up (1:11-12). Joel actually says “Surely the joy of mankind is withered away” (1:12). Making reference to *sason min-b'nei adam*, “rejoicing...from the sons of men” (NASU), is a good indication that this prophecy could include a warning that involves more than just Israel, or at the very least will have an effect beyond that of Israel.

No indication is thusfar stated in Joel's prophecy as to *why* these locusts come, but vs. 12-20 seem to imply that God uses these locusts to enact some kind of punishment or judgments. Joel cries, “Put on sackcloth, O priests and mourn; wail, you who minister before the altar. Come, spend the night in sackcloth, you who minister before my God...Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the LORD your God, and cry out to the LORD” (1:13, 14). A *qadeshu-tzom* and an *atzerah* are to be called “for that day! For the Day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty!” (1:15). These statements may be too general here to immediately associate with an “end-time scenario”; the Prophet Joel's declaration is simply that *Yom ADONAI* “shall come like havoc from Shaddai” (NJPS). Here in ch. 1, the Day of the LORD is depicted as God intervening in history.

The people have been blessed by their God, but now the blessings and their agricultural prosperity have been cut off (1:16-18). All Joel can do is, “To you, O LORD, I call” (1:19). He knows nothing else, as “Even the wild animals pant for you; the streams of water have dried up and fire has devoured the open pastures” (1:20). **It is certainly a time that demands sobriety from God's people, entreating Him to act upon His righteousness.** But there is more to the Day of the LORD that must be considered.

Joel alerts the people to “Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble. For the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand—” (2:1). But this *Yom ADONAI* is no time to indiscriminately blow the *shofar* in some kind of rejoicing—it is a very serious time that demands one to pay attention! It is “a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was of old nor ever will be in ages to come” (2:2). This army will come with fire before it, being immensely powerful (2:3-4), and is said to “leap over the mountaintops” (2:5). It is an army that instills a great deal of fear in those who encounter it: “At the sight of them, nations are in anguish; every face turns pale...Before them the earth shakes, the sky trembles, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine. The LORD thunders at the head of his army; his forces are beyond number, and mighty are those who obey his command. The day of the LORD is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it?” (2:6, 10-

11).

This army described by the Prophet Joel is led by none other than the Lord Himself. While ch. 1 depicts a scene contemporary to Ancient Judah, ch. 2 depicts a scene contemporary with the Millennial Kingdom and/or the eschaton. Yeshua the Messiah's words in Matthew 24:29 regarding His return include a direct allusion to Joel 2:10: "Immediately after the distress of those days 'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'" **Yeshua's Second Coming and the judgment that ensues directly pertain to what YOM ADONAI or the Day of the LORD is in the Tanach Scriptures.**

Even though the Day of the LORD is a time of intense pain and sorrow, He says "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing!" (2:12-14a). With the Day of the LORD imminent, the Prophet Joel says once again to "declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. Gather the people, consecrate the assembly" (2:15b-16a). Elders, children, infants, bridegrooms and brides, and priests are to all come before Him (2:16b-17a)—specifically so that the nations' word for them is not "Where is their God?" (2:17).

When God's people come before Him in total humility, "Then the LORD will be jealous for his land and take pity on his people" (2:18). He promises to "never again...make you an object of scorn to the nations" (2:19). The army coming from the north will be driven away by Him and defeated (2:20), and as Joel says "Surely he has done great things. Be not afraid, O land; be glad and rejoice. Surely the LORD has done great things" (2:21). Zion and its produce will be fruitful once again (2:22-24) as God restores what the locusts have taken away (2:25-26). And as a result, His people "will know that I am in Israel, that I am the LORD your God, and that there is no other; never again will my people be shamed" (2:27). There is strong reason to believe that what Joel has just detailed involves the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19:15-19), and the ensuing restoration of the Land of Israel during the Millennium.

The interesting thing about prophecies in the Tanach is that they are often not delivered in any sequential order—hence the multiple and varied interpretations of them that we all encounter in our Biblical Studies! Joel 2:28-32 is one of the most important sections of Joel's prophecies, beginning with the enigmatic clause *v'hayah acharei-ken*, "And afterward" (NIV) or "After that" (NJPS). It would seem that "afterward" is best taken as a trajectory reference pointing to the End of Days (however long such a period might be), as opposed to it occurring only after the Land of Israel is fruitful again, because surely as His people cry out to Him in prayer and fasting, what God plans to do will be accomplished:

"And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood

before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the survivors whom the LORD calls" (2:28-31).

There are considerable angles with which interpreters have viewed this critical prophecy, but most important is that God's Spirit will be poured out upon *kol basar* or "all flesh" (RSV). There is no discrimination here when it comes to God's Spirit being dispensed upon people; **it includes both men and women**. *True revelation will come forth from this*. This massive outpouring of the Spirit will consummate in *Yom ADONAI* and terrible judgment upon the Earth—but also in a great salvation where people look to HaShem for their salvation! We should not be surprised by any means why the Apostle Peter applied this prophecy to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at *Shavuot*/Pentecost (Acts 2:17-21), although his reference to "the last days" some 2,000 years ago might give us cause to consider for a moment *how long* such a period really is in God's eyes from His perspective sitting outside of time and space.⁵

The Last Days will surely consummate with the Lord restoring "the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem" (3:1), and as Joel says He "will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgment against them concerning my inheritance, my people Israel, for they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land" (3:2). The nations who did harm to God's people will be judged for their great sins against them (3:3), with some specific nations targeted: Tyre and Sidon, Philistia, Greeks, and Sabeans (3:4-8). The nations' warriors will be arisen for war, being told "Let all the fighting men draw near and attack. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears...Let the nations be roused; let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side. Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, trample the grapes, for the winepress is full and the vats overflow—so great is their wickedness!" (3:9, 12-13). Revelation 14:20 gives us more information on the judgment that is to befall:

"They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horses' bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia."

The Day of the LORD or *Yom ADONAI* will not be a pleasant time, but one when "The LORD will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem; the earth and the sky will tremble. But the LORD will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel" (3:16). God's righteousness will at last vindicate His people, saving them from their enemies, but there will be massive casualties and significant blood shed to acquire that vindication.

The Prophet Joel's perspective is specifically one as a servant to the Southern Kingdom, and no one should dispute that the enemies of the Jewish people—and all of the terrible harm done to them—will be punished by God. As He concludes through His Prophet, "Then you will know that I, the LORD your God, dwell in Zion, my holy hill. Jerusalem will be holy; never again will foreigners invade her...But Egypt will be desolate, Edom a desert waste, because of violence done to the people of Judah,⁶ in whose land they shed innocent blood. Judah will

⁵ Consult the author's article "What Happened to Our Eschatology?"

be inhabited forever and Jerusalem throughout all generations. Their bloodguilt, which I have not pardoned, I will pardon.' The LORD dwells in Zion!" (3:17, 19-21). Some of the sinful crimes judged by God may be future evils we have yet to see, but the promise of Jerusalem's restoration remains key. As both Joel and as we should declare: *ADONAI shoken b'Tzion!* "HASHEM dwells in Zion" (ATS).

While it is a relatively short text, the Book of Joel has many things that should cause any Believer to pause and consider the judgment of our God. Joel is traditionally considered on *Shabbat Shuvah*, the Sabbath occurring between *Rosh HaShanah* and *Yom Kippur*. I personally believe that Yeshua's return and the gathering of the saints into the clouds to meet Him will be on *Rosh HaShanah*, followed by a culmination with the final battle on *Yom Kippur*. Knowing this, Joel is something that one should consider at least once a year, never being ignored.

Whether you read through Joel at this time of year or at some other time, the Day of the LORD forces each of us to think about the inevitable return of Messiah Yeshua, a great battle between the armies of Heaven and the armies of Earth, and most importantly God's righteousness triumphing over sin. The Book of Joel should force us to our knees to pray for Planet Earth, so that our family, friends, and loved ones **never stand before God in condemnation**. Even if *we* may have personal redemption in Yeshua, it is still our responsibility to intercede for *others*. That great and terrible Day of the LORD will enact severe retribution and have eternal consequences for those engulfed by it!⁷

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the *New International Version* (NIV), © 1984, published by International Bible Society.

⁶ Heb. *b'nei Yehudah*.

⁷ Consult the entry for the Book of Joel in *A Survey of the Tanach for the Practical Messianic* for a summary of its date, composition, etc.

EPHESIANS BIBLE STUDY

JOIN US TODAY!

Beginning on July 30, we started a Bible study on Paul's letter of Ephesians. The Epistle of Ephesians is a very important text by which today's Messianic movement can learn to understand what it means to actually be "the Commonwealth of Israel" and fulfill God's mission for the world. It has profound significance regarding who the people of God actually are, how Believers are called to appreciate one another, and how we are supposed to live lives of holiness. TNN Online editor J.K. McKee will be considering the First Century context of Ephesians, regarding the controversies of its intended audience, its likely connections with Colossians, and how Tanach concepts about Israel are deeply embedded within its words. This study will challenge many of us not only regarding proposals made in Ephesians' scholarship, but also where today's Messianic movement needs to be heading in the future. *Be sure to be subscribed to our e-mail updates to receive this study!*



A Prayer for God's Mission

by J.K. McKee

02 October, 2008

Many of us know that we would not be here praying before You if it had not been for someone who diligently heeded the call to serve You on some mission front. As we approach You on this, the third day of the Days of Awe, we are immensely thankful and grateful for those who have responded to the mandate upon Your people to be a blessing to others—the gospel as was first known to Abraham (Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:8). We confess before You, O Lord, that we have neglected as a Messianic movement to understand the intricacies and the unfolding of that gospel throughout history (Hebrews 1:1-2), and that we have not been the blessing that we should be. Help us and change us, and enable us to tread a more appropriate path in the days ahead.

You have declared through Your Prophet Isaiah, "How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace and brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation, and says to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'" (Isaiah 52:7). And indeed, we know that "How will they preach unless they are sent?" (Romans 10:15). Because of distractions and our immaturity, we do not often consider these important admonitions, deciding instead that someone else can answer the call to speak of Your blessings to others. We have too often forgotten that we are in a spiritual war (Ephesians 6:12) where souls have been lost to the enemy—people who will spend eternity separated from Your presence. Help us, Father, to see where we have missed it, and how we can once again remember that the world needs the salvation You have provided in Your Son, Yeshua!

Holy One of Israel, You originally called Your people to be a kingdom of priests unto You, intermediaries between You and the world (Exodus 19:5-6). We confess today that we have taken this and applied it to ourselves not as a word of mission and service—but one of inflated pride and domination. As a Messianic movement, we have not often been that beacon of Your light and Your love, but instead have quickly gained a reputation of being a haven of division and false teaching (2 Timothy 4:3). Confessing these sins, O Lord, please transform us into a community to which all people can come, having heard of Your blessings toward us because of our proper obedience to You (Deuteronomy 4:5-6). Make us a conduit of Your redemption. Let us be a Temple of Your presence to which all can come for deliverance (1 Kings 8:41-43; Ephesians 2:21). Let us never place a barrier wall of human invention between ourselves and others—most especially our Jewish and Christian brethren—that will unnecessarily keep people out (Ephesians 2:14-15).

We pray, Heavenly Father, for You to give us a burden for the lost of Planet Earth. We desire to be a Messianic community that can make a difference, being all of the things that Ancient Israel was called to be and much more. We want to be used by You as a means of grace by which all can come to know Yeshua as Savior. We no longer want to have no sense of direction or purpose (Proverbs 29:18), but instead be changed into a missional community that can invite all to come to Your House! Make us be like that city on a hill (Matthew 5:14). Give us, Lord, a vision for the future that involves us being a force of holiness and righteousness—so that by our actions of faith we can hasten the coming of Your Kingdom (2 Peter 3:12).

In Yeshua's Name,
Amen



October 2008 Health Update

by Mark and Margaret Huey

Maintaining our health in order to be more useful to the Lord—for as long as possible—is one of the primary reasons we are committed to helping others with their nutrition choices. We recommend drinking sufficient water daily, regular exercise (heart rate increase, strength, and flexibility), organic “super” foods (if possible), and nutritional supplements in order to sustain optimal health. However, it is wise to also be aware of certain things that might indicate a problem arising with your health.

Shortlist of Symptoms

The following short list of medical symptoms is written by Neil Shulman, MD, the author of *Your Body's Red Light Warning Signals*. In that volume, he describes hundreds of symptoms that could mean life or death for a person, but these are the true “red flags”:

1. Unexplained weight loss. “If you’re on a diet, you’re expecting this to happen,” Shulman says. “But if you’re eating the same way—and now have to adjust your belt a few notches tighter—you could have a serious problem.” Unexplained weight gain can also be a warning, especially with ovarian cancer. “Fluid builds in the abdomen, and women think they’re gaining weight. But if you have been at the same weight range for years, and doing nothing different, see a doctor.”
2. Slurred speech, numbness and/or weakness, and paralysis. You know what this one is—a potential stroke. Rush to the emergency room because quick treatment may save your life as well as prevent brain damage.
3. Black, tarry stools. The food you eat changes stool color, but according to Shulman, black, tarry stools could be the sign of cancer or a bleeding ulcer.
4. A headache with fever and a stiff neck. You may have bacterial meningitis. Quick test: if you can’t put your chin on your chest, you need immediate treatment.
5. A sudden severe headache. If you’re struck out of the blue by a headache that’s worse than any you’ve ever had before, you may have an aneurysm, which is a blood-filled pouch that bulges out from the wall of a brain artery. Get treatment before it breaks—it could save your life.

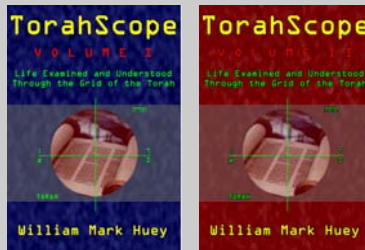
6. For women: postmenopausal vaginal bleeding. Bleeding after menopause is a symptom of several conditions, including deadly uterine cancer. For men: lump in the testicle. A lump could be a sign of cancer, and the best thing for men to do is to regularly check themselves in the shower.

When you seek treatment or consultation, be firm with physicians about testing and ruling out a potentially life-threatening emergency. "Sometimes you have to make a scene," Shulman says. "The one person most likely to be concerned about whether you live or not is you" (Neil Shulman, MD, Newsmax article).

We hope this helps you be more knowledgeable about how to discover early warning signs about your potential health problems. But better yet, consider some of the preventative steps we have been recommending.

To a healthy life!
Mark and Margaret
www.hueyhouse.com

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TorahScope, Volumes I & II are compilations of insightful commentaries on the weekly Torah and Haftarah portions gleaned from the studies and reflections posted by William Mark Huey, director of Outreach Israel Ministries.

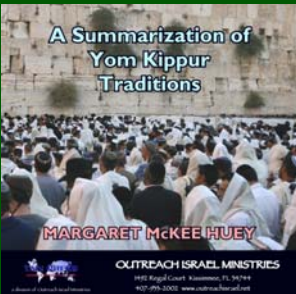
Written from a Messianic perspective, these volumes share uplifting and encouraging testimonies from personal life encounters of how the Torah can be applied in a modern-day setting during this hour of restoration. Many Believers today struggle with understanding how the Torah can apply to their lives and need practical solutions from the Scriptures. *TorahScope* offers you with thoughts that will give you such solutions, and will give you focus for your examination of the weekly Torah portions.



A Summarization of Yom Teruah/ Rosh HaShanah Traditions

Ancient Israel was commanded to convocate at the sounding of trumpets. But what does this convocating involve? Does it just mean that we are to blow the *shofar* as much as we want? In this teaching, Margaret McKee Huey discusses some of the serious elements of this holiday that are often overlooked by Messianic Believers, as we are all called by the Lord to a season of reverence before Him.

\$7.00 plus shipping & handling



A Summarization of Yom Kippur Traditions

Many Messianic Believers recognize that *Yom Kippur* is to be a very important day of intercession before God for our world and for His people, whereas many others do not know what to do because they think that the sacrifice of Yeshua has negated any need for a serious time of spiritual affliction. In this teaching, Margaret McKee Huey discusses the serious elements of the Day of Atonement, while explaining some of the common Jewish customs that are associated with this important commemoration and how Messianic Believers cannot

ignore them.

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A Summarization of Sukkot Traditions

What is the theological significance of "tabernacling" with the Lord? How is Sukkot to be commemorated? What important spiritual lessons are to be learned from the Feast of Tabernacles? In this teaching, Margaret McKee Huey discusses some of the various customs that have become part of the Synagogue's commemoration of Sukkot that the Messianic movement has certainly found edifying for Believers today.

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