



OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

REACH TEACH ENCOURAGE DISCIPLE



APRIL 2011

**YESHUA'S RECOMMENDED
APPROACH TO THE FATHER**



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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 congregation 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

April 2011

This month Jewish people all over the world, the Messianic community, and many searching and hungry evangelical Christians, will take the specific time to remember the great deliverance of Ancient Israel from Egyptian bondage via the Passover. There will be significant times to focus on the great majesty and power of the Holy One of Israel, as the Passover lambs were sacrificed to save His people from the angel of death. Yet for Messiah followers specifically, the Passover is *a most awesome time* to recognize how Yeshua (Jesus) came as *the sacrificial Lamb* to offer Himself up as the permanent sacrifice for the atonement of our sins. In Him we can each have complete reconciliation with the Father!

This year on the Hebrew calendar the leap year addition of the month of Adar II pushes the Spring appointed times, and specifically the Passover (April 19), to the later weeks of April. With several more weeks to go, this should enable you and your family, as well as your congregation or fellowship, some time to adequately prepare. TNN Press' *Messianic Spring Holiday Helper*, and our *Haggadah for Messianic Believers* (including a leader's guide), are definitely two things that you will want to get! Additionally, my two reflective books *Counting the Omer* and *Sayings of the Fathers: A Messianic Perspective on Pirkei Avot*, can assist you in focusing your attention upon the Lord, during the seven-week season between the Festival of Unleavened Bread and *Shavuot*/Pentecost. These materials are all available through our ministry, as we trust that they will greatly bless you and your home beyond measure! **Also, be sure to take advantage of our Virtual Passover 2011 series of teachings, offered via www.outreachisrael.net!**

This month I am continuing to address Yeshua's insightful teachings in His Sermon on the Mount. I have taken a look at His exhortations in Matthew 6 in my lead article entitled, "**Yeshua's Recommended Approach to the Father.**" Perhaps in this season of remembrance, taking another look at how Yeshua directs us to approach our Heavenly Father, will be beneficial to all desiring a closer and more meaningful spiritual walk. Also included is an excerpt from our Confronting Issues booklet, *Looking At the Signs of the Times*, where my wife Margaret talks about the phenomenon of plate tectonics, earthquakes, and volcanoes on our planet.

With much of the talk about the devastating earthquake in Japan, a pending nuclear disaster, the shifting politics in the Middle East—but most disturbing of all the dark presence that continues to grow within our broad Messianic movement—there are many things that each of us can be upset, depressed, and quite frankly always nervous about. But the Holy One of Israel is still on His Throne seeing that His sovereign plan comes to pass. *We need to*

know what our role is in such a plan, and see that we are not taken away from saving faith in Yeshua! As we pray for the diverse situations in the Land of Israel and unrest in the region, we need to petition the Lord for not only protection and guidance for Israel's leaders, **but also** that none of us would be distracted away from what He intends to achieve through our Messianic faith community. Let us go before Him humbly, seeing Him for endurance and perseverance in these trying times...

Thank you very much for your continued support of our ministry efforts, especially through your Spring Holiday offerings and donations to the Outreach Israel Moving Fund!

Advancing His Kingdom, until the restoration of all things...

Mark Huey



OIM MOVING FUND

Outreach Israel Ministries and TNN Online will be relocating from Kissimmee, FL to the Dallas-Ft. Worth metroplex in 2011. The regular work of ministry continues, but with the added responsibility and expenses of moving half-way across the United States. We need your help to defer many of the additional costs!

Please contribute today!

YESHUA'S RECOMMENDED APPROACH TO THE FATHER

by Mark Huey

Yeshua the Messiah's Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chs. 5-7) undoubtedly shares some of the Lord's most profound teachings, as His followers are to be properly directed in the path of practical holiness, being most consciously aware of how their behavior is observed by outsiders (Matthew 5:16). Here, on a hill overlooking the Sea of Galilee, with a multitude carefully listening to every word, Yeshua describes what truly following the Torah of Moses entails—offering His “fulfillment” of the Law. After amplifying the individual blessings that result from a heart bent toward God's priorities (Matthew 5:1-12), the responsibilities for being salt and light by obeying the commandments of Moses' Teaching (Matthew 5:17-19), and discussing various personal relationships among people (Matthew 5:21-48), Yeshua then provides some critical instruction on religious activities and how to avoid hypocrisy. By properly following Him as *the Teacher of Teachers*, today's born again Believers should be striving to have the same degree of intimacy and closeness to the Father that the Son of God was able to demonstrate.

Yeshua's instruction in Matthew ch. 6 includes some of the more practical ways to evidence a fuller comprehension of what He has been teaching. Once the redeemed heart fully embraces and realizes the importance of the responsibilities incumbent upon God's people, then what should follow are some very real, on the ground and day-to-day applications of how this should manifest. There are surely internal and private aspects of this, as disciples peacefully approach the Holy One of Israel—but there are also external and public aspects of this, as we serve Him through various actions of kindness and charity. Yeshua's teaching expounds upon what it means to (1) give secretly and discretely to the poor, (2) pray appropriately to the Father, (3) fast with a focus upon the Father, and (4) seeking the Father exclusively without any anxiety.

The Messiah directs each of us to “be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). This denotes a quality of excellence that seems to be impossible for many mortals to fathom, *but with His help*, is something that each of us needs to reach for every day. All too often, though, in attempting to serve the Lord, a rotten heart condition of purported disciples, who want to appear righteous before their peers, is exposed. In His message seen in Matthew ch. 6, Yeshua certainly knew the limitations, but also the rather fallen, thoughts and intentions of His audience. When an admonition to be perfect is openly declared, the common human inclination is not to try to *first* rectify oneself of ungodly motives and attitudes, but instead to see how such “perfection” can be outwardly demonstrated to others. Even in the Tanach, when directed to anoint the young David, the Prophet Samuel was told to be very careful with what one sees on the outside:

“But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God *sees* not as man sees,

for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

“When you give to the poor...”

The omniscient Creator God is not at all impressed with mere, outward manifestations of righteousness or piety. From Heaven above, He is instead observing, not only the actions, but most importantly, the very intentions of a person’s heart. Yeshua urges a significant degree of discretion and confidentiality to be present, when people who have a level of means give to the poor and needy:

“Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. **But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you**” (Matthew 6:1-4).

Yeshua warns His followers to “Be careful not to do your ‘acts of righteousness’ in front of others, to be seen by them” (TNIV). The purpose of giving to the poor is *to help the poor*, as opposed to helping oneself. The giver of money, food, clothing, medicine, or whatever other supplies the downtrodden may need is to be done discretely, so that the giver is secretly rewarded by the Father. The purpose of giving is not to receive various human accolades or applause.

If there is a possibility that one of us may give to the poor, the homeless, the hungry, or the sick and the destitute—in order that we may receive recognition for it—some might think that it might be better not to give and be tempted to receive some kind of personal glory. Yeshua’s warning is about practicing self-righteousness before others; Yeshua’s teaching is *not* that the poor should be left poor and helpless, especially as “...you always have the poor with you...” (Matthew 26:11; Mark 14:7; John 12:8). The Torah itself prescribes that God’s people are to give generously to the poor, and see that their needs are taken care of:

“If there is a poor man with you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand from your poor brother; **but you shall freely open your hand to him, and shall generously lend him sufficient for his need *in whatever he lacks***” (Deuteronomy 15:7-8).

It is a Biblical requirement that the children of God give freely to those in need. While there are some people who choose not to work, and thus should be withheld gifts of generosity (2 Thessalonians 3:10)—there are clearly those in our world who have befallen on lean times and should be considered poor, in need of an extra, caring hand. Circumstances in life being what they are, there will always be those who we can help out through our monies, or various acts of kindness and grace. As James the Just so excellently tells us, “Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of *our* God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, *and* to keep oneself unstained by the world.” **These are words we can never**

forget, nor repeat too many times! The Apostle John actually ties giving to the poor, or a brother in need, to the love of God residing in the heart of the disciple:

“But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?” (1 John 3:17).

When Yeshua categorically states of, “**when you give to the poor,**” it is not a suggestion or a conditional expression—but a statement of reality that His followers *will give* to the poor. Yeshua’s disciples are to faithfully give to those with some kind of material need. The key, in doing this properly, is to simply give quietly, without attempting to accrue some kind of human credit for the giving. Born again Believers giving generously of their time, talents, skills, and resources is to be a natural manifestation in response to how, “the kindness and philanthropy¹ of God our Saviour appeared” (Titus 3:4, Wesley New Testament) via the redemption available in Yeshua the Messiah.

In today’s Messianic community, many congregations prefer to have a *tzedakah* box, or some other kind of receptacle, perhaps placed strategically near the entrance or exit of their building, where people can discretely place an envelope with their offering. This allows congregants to present their tithes and offerings to the congregation, or earmark funds designated for the poor, without having to go through the more public and far less discrete ritual of passing a collection plate. Yet even with this, some might prefer to give cash in a blank envelope to someone in need so that the source of the gift is unknown except by the Almighty. And not to be overlooked in our electronic age, some people prefer to give to a congregation or various ministries over the Internet, or via some kind of automatic withdrawal, meaning that their names might only be known by various administrative staff.

Nevertheless, the conclusion to be drawn is that Messiah followers tangibly indicate their trust in Him by faithfully giving to the financially challenged, *discretely*. **They are not to make a “big deal” about their giving.** Ironically enough, some of the “big givers” to works of God in today’s world are relatively discrete and anonymous (as they can be) about it; it is instead the “small givers” who tend to be those who want to draw attention to themselves, bragging about it on some level. Is offering such gifts done overtly, with a lot of flourish, so others can see a check placed in the collection plate,² or the offering brought up before others? Or is there a true desire to give according to God’s principles, where discretion and the willingness to help those in financial straights are paramount?

There are many worthy places in the Kingdom of God where if you have financial resources, you can see that they go to good use. There are people who need your help who are in need, *including* those who serve in full-time positions of ministry service. Whether your gift to them be big or small, recognize the need to keep what you do in relative secrecy and obscurity, as your ultimate reward is to come from the Heavenly Father *you serve* by your generosity toward others.

¹ Grk. *hē chrēstotēs kai hē philanthrōpia* (ἡ χρηστότης καὶ ἡ φιλανθρωπία); more commonly rendered as something like “the kindness...and His love for mankind” (NASU).

² Editor’s note: It does need to be kept in mind, though, that in some religious settings if *no collection plate* were passed throughout an assembly, that some people would not be prompted to ever give any kind of offering.

“When you pray...”

If a man or woman believes in God, then it surely behooves each of us to want to talk to Him on some regular basis. Yeshua the Messiah is definitely concerned with how His disciples pray before the Father with the proper motives. The subject of praying has some overlapping principles, as previously witnessed in the instruction on giving, in that one is not only expected to pray—but that praying discretely and in relative secret, is most imperative. The purpose of praying before God is not to be seen for appearance's sake, but rather to truly commune and be one with the Heavenly Father.

Too often, especially in various “religious” circles, one can encounter people speaking prayers—either ritual prayers or those which they themselves have devised and memorized—over and over again to no effect. While Yeshua is by no means “down” on liturgical prayers (indeed, much of the Book of Psalms is *precisely this*), the purpose of prayer is to be in open and frank discussion before the Creator, although highly respectful and rather fearful. The purpose of prayer is not to make a show of how godly one is, flaunting it before outsiders. Such a model of “prayer,” could actually be tantamount to mocking the very Heavenly Father one hopes to entreat with deep concerns and heartfelt requests:

“When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you. And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him” (Matthew 6:5-8).

Following His recommendation on how *not to pray*, Yeshua delivers what has been commonly labeled throughout history as “the Lord’s Prayer.” Far from opposing any kind of ritual or memorized prayer,³ the Lord’s Prayer is one of the most valued and repeated parts of Scripture for born again Believers the world over. The Lord’s Prayer includes some of the most basic requests that each one of us should ask, every day, as we go before our Creator for His guidance, direction, and provision:

“Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen’” (Matthew 6:9-13).

When it comes to praying before God, there is one important caveat that needs to be remembered by one and all: **the requirement to forgive others.** With prayer being such a basic function of each person’s spirituality, we need to never forget that if we fail to forgive those who have harmed or offended us, that the Father in Heaven will not forgive us, either. Without forgiveness issued to others, then do our prayers for forgiveness fall on deaf ears before the Lord?

³ Consult the FAQ on the TNN website, “Liturgy, Hebrew.”

“For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. **But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions**” (Matthew 6:14-15).

Prayer is an expected action of each and every man and woman who calls upon the Holy One of Israel, *and those who pray frequently*, be it through some degree of memorized prayer and/or spontaneous prayer to Him, undoubtedly experience more of His goodness than those who fail to pray. Yeshua makes it abundantly clear, though, that a person’s prayer should be done in such a manner **so as to facilitate intimacy with the Almighty**. Prayer should never be done with the sole intention to gain attention from others, even when there are instances in life when public prayer is required.

When reviewing the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13), none of us can deny the great power in its words. The same is true of many other prayers, praises, cries for help and deliverance, and even words of repentance issued by God’s saints in the Scriptures. Yet for many religious persons, reciting the Lord’s Prayer has become a matter of “empty phrases” (Matthew 6:7, RSV) or “babbling like pagans” (NIV), with no real sense of purpose. In much of Christendom, reciting the Lord’s Prayer has not become a matter of really entreating the Father for His guidance and protection, but it has become almost a rote prayer that has lost much of its significance. As much as we Messianics should highly respect the liturgical tradition of Judaism as seen in the *siddur* or prayer book, which itself was largely inherited from the worship of the Temple (cf. Romans 9:4), how much of it does not stir holiness and an awe for the Almighty—as much as it is used to put on a show by various cantors? Again, while the value of using liturgy and memorized prayers should by no means be discounted, there can be a risk with such prayers possibly becoming stale and hollow.

When prayer becomes a matter of ritual, more than a matter of seeking the Lord, the reality of our Father reigning from Heaven above is minimized. Little thought about the holiness of God’s name and reputation is remembered. Contemplating the power of God’s Kingdom to be manifested on Earth is a fleeting thought. Recognizing that God faithfully gives His children their daily bread is overlooked. Asking for forgiveness of transgressions, without taking time to consider them, can almost be like a get-out-of-jail-free card used in the game of Monopoly. Taking some time to truly forgive those who have wronged you is rare, if not totally bypassed. Asking for the ability to avoid and resist temptation, and being delivered from the presence of evil, could almost be an afterthought. And finally, recognizing His Kingdom, His power, and His glory is something that should surely be more than just a cursory closing statement.

If we each go back and truly reflect on this outline for the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13), it is a prayer with such broad-sweeping statements—that it could take quite some time to truly incorporate its concepts into our approach to the Heavenly Father, and the choices we make in life. For, after the Lord’s Prayer is closed, the reminder that forgiveness of sin from the Father comes though ones forgiveness of others, should make all sincerely understand that forgiveness in order to experience communion with Him is critical. Elsewhere, Yeshua puts it this way:

“Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions” (Mark 11:25).

When you pray, *because* prayer is to be an integral part of your relationship with the Holy One, do so in private *with these thoughts in mind*. Remember that having a forgiving attitude toward others is crucial, because one first understands that he or she has been forgiven by the Almighty. One forgives because he or she has been forgiven, and a heart that has been truly forgiven can ably understand the great majesty of the God of Israel.

“Whenever you fast...”

The instruction of Matthew ch. 6 turns to Yeshua addressing the practice of fasting, coupled with getting one's priorities properly aligned toward the Heavenly Father. Yeshua's expectation is not that people *might* fast, but that they *will* fast. When disciples of the Lord fast, they are to do so in such a way that is unto Him, and not for the sake of displaying self-righteousness. Just as Believers are to give to the poor in secret, God is once again examining the hearts of His people as they appeal to Him in their mode of fasting, which is certainly coupled with prayer:

“Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites *do*, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. **But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done in secret will reward you***” (Matthew 6:16-18).

The act of fasting, perhaps a bit surprising to Twenty-First Century Believers, is considered by Yeshua to be a normal part of someone's life devoted to the Almighty. While there are no specific times for fasting stated here in Matthew ch. 6, there are numerous examples encountered in the Bible of the importance of fasting. One which should immediately come to mind is the need to afflict oneself on *Yom Kippur* or the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:29-31; 23:27). *Most fasting that is witnessed is to necessarily implore God for His mercy and help*. King David fasted for his life and that of Bathsheba's child (2 Samuel 12:16-22), Daniel's fasted for the Jewish exiles (Daniel 9:3), Esther fasted for the Jews of Persia (Esther 3), the fast of Nehemiah ch. 9 was used to recall the sins causing the Babylonian exile, and in Jonah 3:5 we see that the residents of Nineveh fasted after repenting. Fasting also features prominently in the messages of Isaiah 58 and Jeremiah 36. In Second Temple Judaism, as witnessed in Zechariah 8:19,⁴ there were various regular monthly fasts established to remember some of the key events that resulted in the destruction of the First Temple.⁵

⁴ “Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘The fast of the fourth, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth *months* will become joy, gladness, and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah; so love truth and peace’” (Zechariah 8:19).

⁵ Consult Jacob Milgrom, “Fasting and Fast Days,” in [Encyclopaedia Judaica. MS Windows gx](#). Brooklyn: Judaica Multimedia (Israel) Ltd, 1997.

These fast days might have played an important role in some of the Apostle Paul's words encountered in Romans 14. For a further discussion, consult the article “Does the New Testament Annul the Biblical Appointments?” by J.K. McKee.

In Yeshua's ministry, He Himself demonstrated the benefits of fasting before the Father, when shortly after being recognized by His cousin John in the Jordan River, He was led into the wilderness by the Spirit only to be tried by the Devil. After fasting for forty days and forty nights the testing began, but Yeshua had been fortified by the time of fasting as He had drawn near to His Heavenly Father:

"Then Yeshua was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry..." (Matthew 4:1-2).

The practice of fasting, in order to draw near to God and implore His intervention, is followed by a few, highly recognizable teaching statements from Yeshua. These deal specifically with focusing one's attention and trust upon the Almighty, rather than depending on whatever else the world offers as a false alternative:

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth" (Matthew 6:19-24).

Generally speaking, people are offered two choices: **God or wealth.**⁶ The difficulty for Believers throughout history has been determining which one of these a person will choose, *and stick to it*. The undeniable tendency is for many to try to have it both ways, with one foot in God's camp and the other in the world. Walking the proverbial fence is very dangerous, but is easily discerned when one takes note of where someone's treasure is truly located.

Wherever your treasure is, that is the place where your heart will be located. Some self-examination on each of our parts is good at this point, to take note and truly evaluate just where our treasure might be found. The reality is that none of us can serve both the Heavenly Father and a pursuit of riches, because we will eventually love one and despise the other. The bottom line is: **despise the temptations of wealth.**

"Do not be worried about your life"

The final topic seen in Matthew ch. 6 focuses on avoiding anxiety and worry. Yeshua tells us to not be worried about our lives, but to instead seek God's Kingdom and His righteousness first. As we do this, all the things that one might worry about will be taken care of by a loving God. And, no matter how much one worries, no human being is able to change things like the length of life. Pagans make too much of a hassle worrying about the necessities of life, when those

⁶ Some of you have no doubt encountered the designation "mammon" (NASB), as the Greek *mamōnas* (μαμωνᾶς) is a transliterated form of the Aramaic *mamona* (מַמּוֹנָא).

who serve the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob should obviously be able to see how generous He is with all of those who make up His Creation:

“For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, *as to* what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, *as to* what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and *yet* your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And who of you by being worried can add a *single* hour to his life? And why are you worried about clothing? **Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is *alive* today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, *will He not much more clothe you?* You of little faith! Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. **But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.** So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own” (Matthew 6:25-34).**

Yeshua reminds His disciples that worrying or being intensely anxious about sustenance, shelter, or length of life, is to be avoided by the faithful pursuer of God. The examples He uses are very practical, and should be easily understood by us as we observe how birds of the air or flowers of the field are cared for by the Creator. *We should have the confidence that we will be cared for* even more than they, *being people made in His image*. The alternative is to worry, being taken away from His Kingdom and His righteousness, or at least be deterred from accomplishing God’s purposes. So, let us diligently seek our Heavenly Father and allow Him to care for us in every way possible!

Approaching the Heavenly Father

Having just reviewed the importance of giving to others, praying to the Lord, fasting, and not being anxious in life—is a review of how you are personally approaching the Holy One in order? After all, it appears from Yeshua’s statements that entering into the Father’s presence is certainly enhanced when our giving to Him is done properly with the right motives. Additionally, it might be a good time to reevaluate your praying methodology and habits, and how you seek Him through regular times of supplication. What about considering a fast, as another means to get right before Him and prepare your heart to enter into His presence? Finally, have you felt anxious or been worried about certain things in these tumultuous times? If so, perhaps it would be appropriate to take an inventory on where your heart is in regard to Him. *Are you at peace with the Lord?*

If you truly desire the peace of God, then there is an important prescription for attaining such *shalom* and complete well being, which nicely parallels what Yeshua teaches in His Sermon on the Mount. The Apostle Paul wrote the following to his dear Philippians friends:

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by

prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. **And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Messiah Yeshua.** Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you” (Philippians 4:4-9).

The blessing of rejoicing, followed by worry-free prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, is attaining the peace that surpasses all human comprehension. Such a peace will allow a true disciple to properly approach the Heavenly Father, knowing that he or she has clean hands and a pure heart (Psalm 24).

Yeshua’s admonitions and advice established in Matthew ch. 6, give each of us some foundational principles for properly approaching the Holy One of Israel. Yeshua tells us that giving appropriately to those in need is really not an option, but an expected action of His followers. Yeshua instructs His disciples on the proper ways to pray to the Father. Yeshua reminds His listeners that fasting is a normal part of the walk of faith. Finally, the exhortation to be anxious for nothing, but to seek the Kingdom and God’s righteousness, adds a fitting conclusion to these instructions.

While these directives are fairly elementary, they do require each of us to mature in our relationship with the Lord. In your meditations before Him, perhaps you really need to take a good look at your giving practices, your prayer life, your participation in fasts, and analyze your level of anxiety when it comes to the challenges of life. In so doing, I sincerely hope that you will be drawn closer to the Father, as you implement the Son’s rather practical and sensible instructions. For, we are each called to approach the Lord with a great deal of fear and trembling, if we truly desire to serve Him and experience all of the benefits of the salvation He has provided! As Paul observed,

“So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; **for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure**” (Philippians 2:12-13).

May God indeed be found at work in you as well!



COUNTING THE OMER

Have you ever considered the command of Leviticus 23:15-16 to Count the Omer, and wondered how this applies in the modern era? Have you ever wondered how this decree could be more meaningful and fulfilling in your Messianic walk of faith? What critical lessons can be learned in the time between the festivals of Passover and *Shavuot*?

If you can identify with these questions, then *Counting the Omer: A Daily Devotional Toward Shavuot* is just the book for you!

Looking At the Signs of the Times

an excerpt on plate tectonics, earthquakes, and volcanoes on our planet

by Margaret McKee Huey

“As we continue to watch and pray and grieve over the developments in Japan, we may anticipate hearing people ask why God permits such catastrophes as earthquakes and tsunamis. Yet without plate tectonics (the source of these natural disasters), our life-filled planet would look more like celestial neighbors Venus, Mars, and Mercury: barren and hostile.”¹

Mid-Atlantic Ridge, the Ring of Fire, and Plate Tectonics

When the continents were divided, the plates, consisting of the oceanic and continental crusts and the upper most part of the Earth’s mantle, started moving. Today as these plates continue to move, slowly intense geologic activity occurs at the plate edges. In the middle of the Atlantic Ocean is the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, which marks where the new ocean floor is being formed, from which hot lava flows out from the Earth’s center. The Atlantic is slowly getting larger. However, circling the Pacific Ocean on the bottom of the ocean floor, there lie a dramatic series of volcanic arcs and oceanic trenches. This “Ring of Fire” is notorious for 75% of the earthquakes and vol-

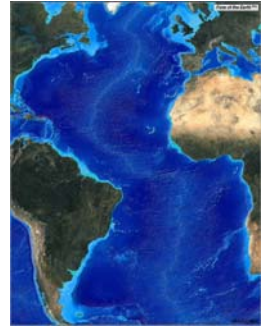


Illustration 2
Mid-Atlantic Ridge

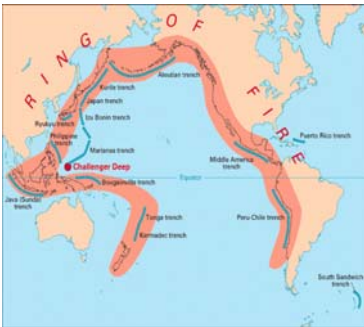


Illustration 3
The Ring of Fire

canic eruptions that coincide with the edges of the world’s main tectonic plates.

The 26 December, 2004 tsunami was a result of a 9.0 underwater earthquake off the coast of Sumatra, which is on the edge of one of these powerful plates.

Continental Plates – Plate Tectonics

The oceanic plates are forced to move under the continental plates as they collide, causing the Pacific to slowly get smaller. The movement of these plates usually gives little warning to those who are at risk in low-lying coastal areas.

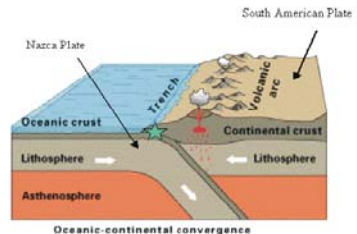


Illustration 4
Inside an earthquake

Earthquakes

An earthquake occurs when the geological

¹ Jeff Zweerink (2011). *Purposeful Plate Tectonics. Reasons to Believe*. Retrieved 08 April, 2011, from <http://reasons.org>.

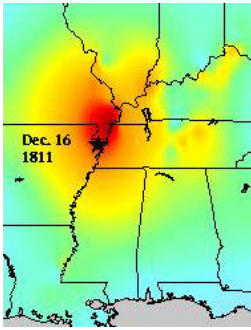


Illustration 5
New Madrid Earthquakes,
1811-1812

forces from the moving plates build up slowly and eventually become so strong that they cause the rocks to break underground. Great energy is released in the form of seismic waves that come from the center of the break and spread out in all directions, causing the ground to shake, move, and break along fault lines. More earthquakes occur along the Pacific Ring of Fire than any other place. However, many people are not aware that the most severe seismic disturbance recorded in North America had its epicenter in New Madrid, Missouri with three major earthquakes in: December 1811, January, and February 1812.

The Richter scale had not yet been invented, but most scientists believe that these quakes would have each measured more than 8.0. At the time, the central Mississippi Valley was sparsely populated. However, the reports of the time said that the earthquakes were felt by over two-thirds of the United States, and as far away as Washington, D.C. The Mississippi River flowed backwards for a while, five towns disappeared, many islands in the Mississippi River disappeared, and two major lakes were formed (Reelfoot Lake in Tennessee and St. Frances Lake in Arkansas). The New Madrid zone is in the middle of the North American Plate and not on its edge, but it seems to represent a weak point in it, possibly because of the Mississippi River.

Today, this area has more earthquake activity than any other in the United States east of the Rocky Mountains. While studying at Vanderbilt University in the 1970s, I had the privilege of sitting under one of the leading experts of the New Madrid earthquakes. Dr. Richard Stearns conducted extensive studies on the Reelfoot Lake area, and took many of his students with him to help with geological measurements. I will never forget Stearns saying that he believed that the New Madrid Fault would again have a devastating earthquake in our time, but now the area is no longer sparsely populated—it is vastly populated! Chicago, Memphis, St. Louis, down to New Orleans, and all the land around these cities would all be devastated should another major earthquake occur again. Recently, I heard a minister make a “prophecy” about the New Madrid Fault and the devastation he believes will happen there. Yet, this is a possible geological event that I have known about, and have been telling people about, for over thirty years—not because I am some prophet, but because I have studied this fault. Unfortunately for people like me, when the New Madrid Fault experiences an earthquake in the future, we will not get credit for warning others—these “prophets” will!

And back to the 12 May, 2008 earthquake in China: Did you know that China’s deadliest earthquake in modern history was not in May 2008, but struck the northeastern city of Tangshan on 28 July, 1976, killing 240,000 people? And yet Biblically, Yeshua would still consider such major geological occurrences as not worldwide, but just **“earthquakes in divers places”** (Matthew 24:7). Were these earthquakes sent by God to punish people, or were they the natural development of our dynamic Earth as the continents continue to move and relieve internal tectonic stress? If they are the latter, then such earthquakes are simply the result of the continental movement that God put into place when He created our world.

Volcanoes

A volcano is a type of mountain with a vent or a fissure through which molten and solid materials, and hot gases can pass. A volcano leads to below the Earth's surface to very hot chambers several miles underground where magma, hot rock, and hot gases are ultimately released causing an eruption. A volcanic eruption occurs when shifts in the tectonic plates build up pressure beneath the volcano. There are more volcanoes along the Ring of Fire than anywhere else in the world. Many of the Pacific Islands have been formed by volcanic activity or are themselves volcanoes that have risen out of the ocean.

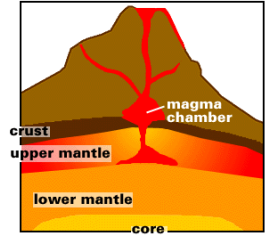


Illustration 6
Inside a volcano

When the 26 December, 2004 9.0 earthquake and tsunami occurred, the event immediately reminded me of the 1883 eruption of the volcano Krakatoa which is found at the same origin: the convergence of the Indian and Asian tectonic plates west of Sumatra.

The 1883 eruption of Krakatoa is still considered to be the biggest natural phenomenon ever seen on Earth in recorded times. It had been dormant for over 300 years when it erupted and spewed volcanic debris all over the Java and Sumatra islands in Indonesia. The noise was heard more than 2,500 miles away in Australia. Waves reached up to 130 feet and killed almost 40,000 people. There is no way to know how many people really were lost.

Krakatoa's tsunami was even more powerful than this more recent tsunami, though it did not spread as far. Much of the energy from Krakatoa went into the atmosphere, while the 2004 underground earthquake's energy was all directed from the bottom of the ocean into a column of water killing 94,000 in Sumatra alone. Although the degree of destruction was like the aftermath of an atomic bomb, the 2004 tsunami did not have the long-term effects of Krakatoa's explosion—which altered the climate of the whole planet for over three years.

In 1883 there was actually so much volcanic debris spewed into the atmosphere that the Earth's temperature was lowered globally. Sunsets and sunrises were so dramatic around the world that there were even reports that people thought that the sky was on fire. But just as it was then, it is now; Yeshua said **“the time is not yet”** (Matthew 24:6). Are volcanoes sent by God to punish the world, or are they the natural way of things along the Ring of Fire as the tectonic plates—which God put into place when He created our world—move?

There are many people out there today with whole ministries **that are solely playing on the fear** of the End of the Age. They are using various weather and geological occurrences to scare people. They tie events together and presumptuously call it God's judgment—and they often get away with it over and over again because we do not know how to speak up, and/or we are ignorant of how the world really works. We do not know why bad things happen to good people, and we need to be very careful about passing judgment on people when bad things do happen. We are to be about our Father's business to help spread the gospel of His Kingdom and discipling others, knowing that He alone knows when all the end-time happenings will finally be put in place.

Until then, see that you be not troubled! Place your faith in the Lord and know that He will be there to protect you in the days that are prophesied to come at the End!

KOSHER YOUR PLATE

edited by Margaret McKee Huey

It is my intention to bring our Messianic cooks timely recipes of interest in each issue of the OIM News. In this issue, I have included three of our favorite foods for Passover!

Baked Passover Lamb

5 pound boned leg of lamb
Garlic salt & pepper

Prepare a boned Leg of Lamb for cooking by soaking it in salt water so that all the blood is drained out. Cut off the fat. Rub garlic salt and pepper on the meat to your taste. Place the lamb on a rack in a shallow roasting pan to keep it out of the drippings. Roast at 350 degrees about 2 – 2 ½ hours, or until a meat thermometer reads between 160-170 degrees. Let the roast set for 15 minutes covered. Carve and serve!

Charoset

4 tart apples, cored and grated
1 ½ cups chopped pecans or walnuts
3 tablespoons granulated sugar
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground ginger
1 ½ teaspoons grated lemon rind
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
Passover Red Wine

Combine all ingredients and blend with enough wine to give a spreading consistency. Makes 8-10 servings.

Meringue Cookies

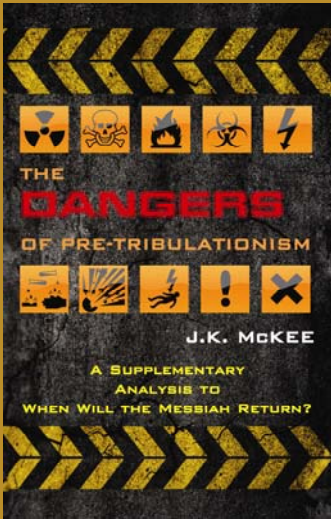
3 egg whites
1 cup granulated sugar
¼ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
¾ cup chopped pecans

Mix egg whites, sugar, salt and vanilla into top of a double boiler. Place over boiling water and beat with a electric hand mixer until the mixture stands in stiff peaks. Scrape the bottom and sides of pan while you mix with a rubber spatula. Stir in nuts. Drop heaping teaspoonfuls of dough on 2 lightly greased baking sheets. Cook one sheet at a time in a preheated 300 degree oven for 12-15 minutes, or until lightly browned. Makes about 3 ½ dozen cookies.

Please submit your recipes to Margaret Huey at the OIM office for inclusion in this column and our upcoming cookbook "Kosher Your Plate."

Available from TNN Press:

THE DANGERS OF PRE-TRIBULATIONISM



paperback edition ©2011

The pre-tribulation rapture is an extremely popular doctrine, which advocates that Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) can unexpectedly come at any moment for the saints, gathering them into Heaven before the Tribulation period or Seventieth Week of Israel. Pre-tribulationism has sold many books, spawned numerous fiction series and movies, and has created a large financial market for prophecy materials. But in spite of its popularity in much of today's evangelical Christianity, few question it. When presented with alternative points of view such as post-tribulationism, adherents of the popular pre-tribulationist position can sometimes take strong offense, and they can be found to outright ignore Biblical passages that appear to contradict their position.

This report is an expanded edition of one of TNN Online's most controversial articles. It answers the top reasons why people believe in the pre-tribulation rapture from a Messianic post-tribulationist perspective. It considers whether or not various pre-tribulationists have employed tactics of fear and faithlessness, and whether or not their ideology of escapism can be supported by a fair reading of the Holy Scriptures. Are God's people able to be protected by Him--or not--during the end-times? Specifically considered and responded to are fifty reasons given in support of the pre-tribulation rapture by former Dallas Theological Seminary chancellor John F. Walvoord. Above all, a fairness that it not always given to post-tribulationists is demonstrated to pre-tribulationists.



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