



OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

REACH TEACH ENCOURAGE DISCIPLE



JUNE 2011

**SHAVUOT, LOVE,
AND GOOD DEEDS**



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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

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

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OIM UPDATE

June 2011

This year the month of June begins with one of the most significant anniversaries in the history of modern-day Israel, as June 1 is also the 28th of Iyar on the Hebrew calendar, when Jerusalem Day or *Yom Yerushalayim* is commemorated. It was on this day in 1967 (actually June 7, 1967 was the 28th of Iyar that year) that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) overcame the Jordanian forces, and liberated Jerusalem from Arab control. Since that time forty-four years ago, the city of Jerusalem has been secured and protected by the Israeli government, allowing for safe and secure access to all of the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim religious sites in greater Jerusalem. This arrangement has opened the gates for a flood of visitors to Jerusalem, as Israeli tourism has blossomed. Consequently, there is little doubt that the millions of God-fearing pilgrims, who have made the trek to Jerusalem since the liberation, have been used by the Lord to invigorate a legion of prayer warriors and supporters, who fervently pray for the peace of Jerusalem as instructed by Scripture:

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: ‘May they prosper who love you. May peace be within your walls, and prosperity within your palaces’” (Psalm 122:6-7).

In recent days, many Jewish and Christian followers of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—and most especially Messianic Believers—have been reminded of the need to pray. Once again, the contemporary issues surrounding an Israeli and Palestinian two-state solution with defensible borders, the division of Jerusalem, the Palestinian refugee dilemma, the West Bank settlers, and other challenges—are being debated and discussed by governmental leaders of Israel and America, its staunchest ally. So in this season of concern, especially as the countries of the world seem to be aligning with the Palestinians, in their vain attempt to unilaterally declare sovereign Palestinian statehood with Jerusalem as their capital in September at the United Nations, we encourage all to pray and stay aware of what is transpiring in the Holy Land.

This month of June, we should each be anticipating a wonderful day of celebration, as the Feast of Weeks or *Shavuot* is commemorated early this month. Of course, with the city of Jerusalem in mind—the place of His choosing—we must be reminded of the Torah instruction to appear before the Lord with offerings presented to Him:

“Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread and at the Feast of Weeks and at the Feast of Booths, **and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed.** Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you” (Deuteronomy 16:16-17).

While most of us will not be in Jerusalem this year to present any offerings, allow me to remind you of some plans laid on our hearts for Shavuot 2012. In the May 2010 issue of OIM News, I wrote an article called “Shavuot: A Celebration to Remember,” where I detailed envisioning a special commemoration of unity in

Jerusalem for 2012. With only a year to go before our anticipated excursion, I want to remind you of the opportunity to travel with us to the Land of Israel for a full tour, *including* a remembrance of *Shavuot* in Jerusalem. We have already secured our tour guide, and will be releasing the final details in the months ahead. For more information, you can access our Facebook group for **Shavuot-Pentecost Am Echad Israel Tour 2012**, accessible via our website at <www.outreachisrael.net>. This year we can expectantly say: "Next year in Jerusalem!"

This issue of Outreach Israel News focuses upon some of the important themes of the Festival of *Shavuot*, as we should each seek the Father's will and purpose for our lives. In this issue, J.K. McKee has written a short piece entitled, "**Shavuot, Love, and Good Deeds,**" emphasizing the requirement upon Believers to be guided by the Spirit in obedience to God's Word. We have also included an article from my loving wife, Margaret McKee Huey, called "**The Gospel According to Torah: It Happened at Shavuot!**" Be encouraged at this special time of year to keep pursuing the Lord, His path of holiness, *and above all* be sure to intercede for the salvation of others!

We continue to very much appreciate your consistent prayers and support for our Moving Fund and TNN Press Book Printing project. 2011 is a definite year of transition for us, and we know that all things take place in the Father's perfect timing!

Advancing His kingdom until the restoration of all things...

Mark Huey



Am Echad Israel Tour Shavuot-Pentecost May/June 2012

Join **Outreach Israel Ministries** Directors Mark and Margaret Huey, and TNN **Online** editor John McKee, for our Am Echad Israel Tour 2012 (May 22-June 4, 2012) featuring an Am Echad Shavuot in Jerusalem, as well as a traditional tour of the Land of Israel. Our tour guide will be native Israeli Rami Danielli (a Messianic Jewish Believer who lives in the Galilee area), who has years of guide experience coupled with a deep love for the Messiah Yeshua.

Based on current projections, the estimated cost is approximately \$3300 per person for twelve hotel nights (which includes breakfast and dinner but not lunches, tips, etc.) **More information available at www.outreachisrael.net**

SHAVUOT, LOVE, AND GOOD DEEDS

by J.K. McKee

There are likely many things which are present in the hearts and minds of today's Messianic Believers, as they contemplate the commemoration of the Feast of Weeks or *Shavuot*. Our most common thoughts tend to be focused upon the awesome scene of fire and smoke, with Moses being given the Ten Commandments by God at Mount Sinai, and/or the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Believers gathered together at the Upper Room. Throughout the Messianic movement, *Shavuot* will be remembered in any number of ways: some traditional, and some not so traditional. In the Jewish Synagogue, *Shavuot* is often remembered with a customary reading of the Book of Ruth, as well as with various milk products like cheese or ice cream (cf. Song of Songs 4:11). In the Messianic world, some kind of an emphasis upon the Law of God and the grace of God, is likely to be found in teaching(s) delivered. While *Shavuot* is not at all a time for Believers to “party,” a welcoming and relatively festive atmosphere is often present this time of year at Messianic congregations and fellowships.

Every year during the appointed times, each of us within the Messianic community should take a few moments to pause, and consider where we stand before the Lord, and before one another. *Are we sure that we are doing all of the things that Messiah followers should be doing?* If we share a common conviction that each of the appointed times bears some kind of Messianic substance to them (cf. Colossians 2:16), then do we let a holiday like *Shavuot* be one of those yearly points when we make sure that we are living forth its key message for men and women of faith? Are we at all becoming more like the Lord Yeshua?

Whether it is the Exodus at Passover, the new year at *Rosh HaShanah*, the sins of corporate Israel at *Yom Kippur*, or even the giving of the Torah at *Shavuot*—praying for the lost of Planet Earth, who without Divine intervention are likely to die in their trespasses and sins—is a worthwhile practice. Each of the appointed times has a particular theme—be it deliverance, a new beginning, or communal repentance—that needs to be considered. For *Shavuot*, which tends to focus our attention upon both the giving of the Torah to Ancient Israel and the outpouring of the Spirit—Messianic Believers need to be seriously focusing on the role that the Spirit plays in compelling redeemed persons to obedience. Joel prophesied,

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh [*kol-basar*]; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions” (Joel 2:28, RSV).

The Apostle Peter picked up on this theme in Acts 2:17-21. While the outpouring of the Holy Spirit surely involves God's people being empowered to do mighty works, many of which are borne out in the testimony of the Book of Acts—some of the key works required surround that simple axiom: “Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Messiah” (Galatians 6:2). If one

wants to follow the Torah as demonstrated by Messiah, then an obedience focused around those key commandments of love for God and neighbor will be present (Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18; cf. Matthew 19:19; 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27; Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8).

One of the most important verses in the Holy Scriptures, which I believe that every Messianic person needs to commit to memory, is Paul's instruction of Romans 8:3-4: "For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." Those who walk according to the Spirit, will be able to obey God's Torah as He has always intended. The Phillips New Testament says, "Therefore we are able to meet the Law's requirements...in obedience to the promptings of the Spirit." As a Messianic teacher who interacts with many evangelical Christians, they can be pretty surprised when they find out that while the promised New Covenant enacted by the Messiah does indeed provide them with permanent forgiveness and a permanent sacrifice for sin—it also especially includes the stipulation that God's Law will be supernaturally written onto their hearts and minds (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27; cf. Hebrews 8:8-12; 10:16-17).

There is no doubt in my mind that with much of the debate within our faith community about the relevance and purpose of God's Torah, **there has been little emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit.** With too little or not enough emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit, should we be surprised when some outsiders consider today's Messianic movement (or at least that which they have witnessed) to be an *unwelcoming* place of *unlove*? A true love and feeling, of comfortable welcome, can only be stimulated by God's presence infilling His people.

I remember a previous *Shavuot*, when, looking at some of the ups-and-downs that the Messianic world had recently gone through, I admonished a number of people that: *This year we need to put a culture of rivalry behind us.* I thought it useful to direct the attention to others to Hebrews 10:24: "let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds." If there is any provocation that should take place among Messianics, it should not be to make others angry, feel out of place, or to make one group feel better or superior to another group. The Feast of Weeks, being a time when Messianic Believers commonly gather to remember the giving of the Torah and the outpouring of the Spirit, should be ideal for each of us to commit ourselves to good deeds. We should serve one another better. We should help one another. At the very least, if we have any personal weaknesses that can negatively impact the faith community, we should commit ourselves to a more conscious obedience of instructions such as, "tak[e] every thought captive to the obedience of Messiah" (2 Corinthians 10:4), or "the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God" (James 1:20).

Do you know what I found out when I gave that admonition? I found out that there are quite a few Messianic people who are **completely unconscious** as to what these things actually mean. While every person goes through ups-and-downs in spirituality, and none of is entirely "perfect"—when you tell some of

today's Messianics that the only kind of *stirring* they are really permitted to actively conduct is how each of us perform more good works, they do not like hearing about it. Why? *Maybe some people were just having a bad day*—I hope. When some of today's Messianic leaders take offense at you trying to focus the attention of us all, upon loving one another and performing good works of kindness and service, should we not be a little worried?

Over the past several months, many of you are likely to have been following the various FAQ entries posted on the TNN Online website, about a variety of New Testament passages commonly used to claim that the Law of Moses has been abolished. These entries are excerpted from the forthcoming paperback edition of *The New Testament Validates Torah*. While updating and expanding this publication has in some ways been a “chore,” it has also been a great blessing for me to see that there have been many Christian voices throughout history which have always looked to the Torah or Moses' Teaching for instruction on how to live a godly life. While these people have had a tendency to focus more on things like acts of helps for the community in obedience to the Law, than on eating kosher or being circumcised, none of us can deny the positive impact of Christian men and women who have always looked to the Torah's “moral law” for guidance in piety and holiness. One of my favorite quotations is from John Wesley, in his Sermon #34, “Properties of the Law”:

“Therefore, I cannot spare the law one moment, nor more than I can spare Christ: seeing I now want it as much, to keep me to Christ, as I ever wanted it to bring me to him. Otherwise, this ‘evil heart of unbelief’ would immediately ‘depart from the living God.’ Indeed each is continually sending me to the other,—the law to Christ, and Christ to the law. On the one hand, the height and depth of the law constrain me to fly to the love of God in Christ; on the other, the love of God in Christ endears the law to me ‘above gold or precious stones;’ seeing I know every part of it as a gracious promise, which my Lord will fulfill in its season.”¹

Here, we see a testimony of how the instruction of the Torah is to guide one to the Messiah, and the Messiah and His example of service are to guide one back to the Torah. Messiah faith and obedience to the Law are not considered contradictory or in opposition; they exist together in a symbiosis, in the heart of a transformed man and woman empowered by the Spirit for good works.

In spite of the many problems which are present in today's Christianity, Judaism, and even the Messianic movement—the Lord is surely doing something special and unique. Jewish people are coming to faith in Yeshua like never before. Evangelical Christians are embracing their Hebraic Roots as a lifestyle to be followed. *With the Messiah as the emphasis, lives are being transformed.*

As many of us can testify, this is something that only the Spirit of God can do—especially with much of the opposition and peer pressure (external *and* internal) that goes against it. This *Shavuot*, I encourage you to be a Messianic Believer who stands firm in the Lord as one who is recommitted to a loving path of obedience, **ever eager to perform good deeds in Him toward *many others!***

¹ N. Burwash, ed., *Wesley's Doctrinal Standards Part I: The Sermons, with Introductions, Analysis, and Notes* (Salem, OH: Schmull Publishing, 1988), 350.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO TORAH: It Happened at Shavuot!

by Margaret McKee Huey

As we approach the End of the Age, many people are being restored back to the Hebraic Roots of the faith. It is an exciting time to watch, as scales fall off of the eyes of many brothers and sisters in the Lord, as Jewish people come to faith in Messiah Yeshua, and non-Jewish Believers embrace a return to the First Century ways of the early Believers! People are returning to the ancient paths! People are starting to fully walk the way Yeshua walked!

We who are embracing a Messianic expression of faith are honoring the seventh-day *Shabbat* again. We have been encouraged to obey the words of Moses:

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy” (Exodus 20:8-10).¹

We are studying the Torah on a weekly basis. In the Book of Acts, James the brother of Yeshua states the following about those who were coming into the faith in the First Century, who were not raised in the Synagogue, much like us today:

“For Moses [meaning, the first 5 books of the Bible called the Torah] from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath” (Acts 15:21).²

We Messianics are observing the appointed times of the Lord:

“These are the appointed time of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at the time appointed for them” (Leviticus 23:4-5, 6-44).

Moses goes on to teach about Passover, Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks/Pentecost, the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles.

We Messianics are practicing a set-apart, sanctified lifestyle by following commandments that will instruct us how to be purified from the things of the world, things like the dietary laws which teach us how to separate the holy from the profane. These are the words of James the Just, to the new followers of Yeshua who came from the nations, about their eating habits:

“But that we write to them that they abstain from things polluted by idols

¹ For more information, consult the *Messianic Sabbath Helper* by TNN Press.

² For more information, consult the chapter “What Happened at the Jerusalem Council?” in *Torah In the Balance, Volume 1* by J.K. McKee.

and from fornication and from *meats* strangled and from blood” (Acts 15:20).³

All of these things that we do as Messianic Believers compose what we often call being “Torah observant”—indicating that we “follow the commandments.” In fact, in Revelation 12:17, it reads that the end-time saints are those “who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Yeshua.”

I have just mentioned some of the different ways in which we are now actively keeping the commandments of God as never before, as we are striving to live like the First Century Believers—but **what about having the testimony of Yeshua?** Obeying God must be joined by knowing that we have been redeemed by the work of His Son. Let us look at what happened to Peter and the other Apostles on that first *Shavuot* fifty days after the resurrection of Yeshua—and only ten days after He had ascended into Heaven!

“And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were bewildered, because they were each hearing them speak in his own language” (Acts 2:1-6)

On that first *Shavuot*, after the resurrection of Yeshua, Peter preaches to those who are gathered in Jerusalem. He says,

“Men of Israel, listen to these words: Yeshua the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know” (Acts 2:22)

Peter then reviews the events of the life, death, and resurrection of Yeshua of Nazareth. Many had been in Jerusalem during these events, but others had come a long way, as they lived in the Diaspora, and had not been in Jerusalem to hear about the events surrounding Yeshua’s execution. Peter recites a prophecy of the resurrection from Psalm 16, where David speaks of the Messiah who was to come and who was to be raised from the dead. Peter proclaims that he, the Apostles, and others have been witnesses to all of these events, and that it was the promise of the Holy Spirit being poured forth—that these people who were assembled had all just seen and heard on this *Shavuot*. But this next Scripture is the most important of all when they respond to Peter and the others:

“Now when they heard this, they were **pierced to the heart**, and said to Peter, and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brethren, what shall we do?’ And Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Messiah Yeshua for the forgiveness of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself’” (Acts 2:37-39)

It is recorded in the Book of Acts that three thousand were saved that day:

³ For more information, consult the article “To Eat or Not to Eat?” by J.K. McKee.

“And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and braking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved” (Acts 2:46-47)

And as further recorded by Luke in Acts, Peter and the others continue to proclaim the gospel of salvation to all they interacted with, as they testified about the restoration of all things:

“Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be blotted out, in order that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Yeshua, the Messiah appointed for you, whom Heaven must receive until the time of restoration of all things, about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from antiquity” (Acts 3:19-21).

So, as part of this end-time move of the Lord today, while Believers are being restored back to the things of the First Century, and we learn to be a mixed assembly of Jewish and non-Jewish Believers in Yeshua—we have to be both keeping the commandments of God *and* sharing the testimony of Yeshua that we have. It is the testimony of Yeshua and truly being born again ourselves, and then the sharing of this gospel from Scripture, as Peter did, that we need to really emphasize! This is because whenever a wonderful move of God is at hand, the enemy always works overtime to see who he can deceive and devour. How much more so should we be on guard now, during this amazing time of restoration, when the Father is drawing people into a Messianic walk of faith from very diverse backgrounds?

We have to return to the spiritual experiences of that day of *Shavuot* and share salvation that comes from Yeshua. Righteousness does not come from trying to keep the commandments. Righteousness comes from the blood of Yeshua covering our sins, because we really can never completely keep the Torah. *This is why Yeshua died in our place.* This is why we have to repent of our sin nature and receive Him, be baptized or immersed in His name, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. And if we really are in the end-times (or at least getting closer), then we need to be very aware of the major end-time lie that Paul warns us about:

“[A]nd with all the deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie” (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12).

Here is the question of this age: How can a person, who is coming back to the Hebraic Roots of the faith and being obedient to God’s commandments, ever be swept away by the end-time strong delusion that appears to be for only the unrighteous people who are perishing? Could such a person be practicing a form of righteous living, yet really be unrighteous? Remember that on that day of *Shavuot* or Pentecost, those who heard Peter preach were people who followed the commandments—yet they were “pierced to the heart”—and said to Peter and the other Apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” Peter knew

that they had been convicted about their sinful hearts, and that they had been pierced, so he was then able to tell them **to repent!**

Those gathered at Shavuot were “cut” (RSV, NIV) or “pierced to the heart” (NASB). Richmond Lattimore’s translation renders it as “they were stricken to the heart.” The verb used by Luke to describe this deep emotion is *katanussomai* (κατανύσσομαι), meaning to “be **pierced, stabbed** fig. of the feeling of sharp pain connected w. anxiety, remorse” (BDAG).⁴ It is interesting to note that this verb is used in the Septuagint, in Genesis 34:7, to describe the intense pain of the Shechemites after they had circumcised themselves. Is not then this “pierced heart” the same as the circumcision of the heart that is required at the new birth?

So again, how can a person be unrighteous who is practicing righteous living?

The answer is very simple and yet so profound that it usually escapes even the most serious so-called “Believers.” The answer is simply that **“they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved”** (2 Thessalonians 2:10, KJV). *Might be saved?* Isn’t that easy? Don’t you just ask Yeshua or Jesus into your heart because you believe He is the Messiah? Those present with Peter at *Shavuot* found out that it was a heart issue.

The Answer

To find the answer to the question, we must determine what the “love of the truth” is. It is simply, yet profoundly, receiving the Divine *agapē* love that the Father uses by His Holy Spirit to bring us to the point of desiring, above all else, to find out the truth concerning ourselves so that we can repent and be saved. We have to earnestly, with our whole hearts, come to the point of being broken before a holy and righteous God to such a degree—that we finally realize that nothing we can do in or by ourselves will ever make us righteous. Our heart has to be pierced! We have to recognize that we, although made in the image of God, have also inherited the nature of our fallen ancestor, Adam. We have to come to the point of realizing just how much of a sinner we are!

Unfortunately, this gospel of salvation is rarely preached from many Christian or Messianic platforms today. The key, to understanding what the “love of the truth” is, is to come to grips with who we are ourselves. As Yeshua, so directly, told Nicodemus,

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God...Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?” (John 3:3, 10).

The Lord further warns His listeners, who may study the Bible faithfully, that they are yet falling short:

“You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life” (John 5:39-40).

What is the key ingredient that so many of us overlook? **We have to truly**

⁴ BDAG, 523.

understand why we need to be saved! We have to have truly come to terms with the hard fact that we are sinners and that we deserve to be forever separated from God. We have to have come to the realization that we do not have the power to even see the Kingdom of God in our natural, unregenerated state. We have to have come to terms with the fact that we could keep the commandments of the Torah perfectly, but still miss something.

We must realize that the vast majority of us have always been commandment breakers, and we are predisposed to always function in our flesh. We have to have truly come to the end of ourselves, and to have had our hearts broken concerning ourselves, so that we can honestly proclaim ourselves to be the sinners that we are! We have to have come to the end of ourselves with godly sorrow and have repented of our sin, which means to turn from those ways of sin, that we do indeed know we have committed. Listen to the following words of Yeshua concerning repentance for the sinner:

“I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3).

“I tell you that in the same way, there will be *more* joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance” (Luke 15:7).

Take important notice of these words that Yeshua spoke to His followers, just following His resurrection:

“Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (Luke 24:45-47).

The Apostle Paul teaches us the difference between the sorrow that is prompted by God and the sorrow that comes from the world:

“For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death” (2 Corinthians 7:10)

In order to be saved, we need to have grasped hold of the reality that Messiah Yeshua died in our place to cover us with His atoning sacrifice for our sin—but we have to have died to ourselves before we can lay claim to this sin covering. In Hebrews 9:22 we read,

“This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you...and according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood these is no forgiveness” (Hebrews 9:20, 22).

We have to have died to our pride, our independence, our self-justification, our self-righteousness, or self-esteem—in essence, we **have to have died to ourselves**. In the fallen state of people, God Himself moves on them through the words in His Torah and brings to their mind and soul that they are sinners and not keeping the commandments out of cleansed hearts, *if at all*. He moves them to be real with themselves and admit that they have

fallen far from His glory. It is the sorrow that He works in them that allows them to be real with themselves and want to repent with their whole hearts. The sorrow that is from the world is that which makes us sorry that we were caught doing something; it does not cause us to really want to change and turn—to repent. This worldly sorrow will only led to our spiritual death in the long run. We will never be saved if we only have worldly sorrow.

My friends, this message of salvation is rarely preached or taught anymore. It is not a popular message, but it is the message of the **pierced heart**. It is the message that was first delivered to the saints by Yeshua and was proclaimed by all of the Apostles. It is called the gospel of salvation! It is the salvation that saves us from the penalties of not keeping Torah fully. Let's repeat again the words of Peter right after that first *Shavuot* when the Holy Spirit was poured out on those who believed and repented:

“Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be blotted out, in order that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Yeshua, the Messiah appointed for you, whom Heaven must receive until the time of restoration of all things, about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from antiquity” (Acts 3:19-21).

Personal Testimony

I was raised in a fairly typical American Christian home in the 1950s and 1960s. I went to Church and Sunday School on Sunday. I sang in the Church Youth Choir from the ages of 10 through 17. I was active in the Youth Group in high school, even being its president for two years. I believed Jesus (Yeshua) was the Messiah. I believed everything that I had been taught about Him that was contained in the Apostles' Creed that we repeated every Sunday. I had asked Him into my heart at a young age. **I had even said “the sinner's prayer.”** Good Heavens, my grandfather was even a minister! Yet I was completely and hopelessly lost. I was perishing. I was not born again—and I didn't even know it. I, myself, was under the strong delusion!

I was under the delusion that I did not have to deal with being a sinner, specifically. I was too young to do that when I had been led in the sinner's prayer. I was under the delusion that I could believe in Jesus, but not have to repent. I was under the delusion that as a young child I could make a “decision” that dealt with sin, yet I was too young to understand what sin was. I stayed in this state of delusion until I was 30 years old.

You see, as a child I knew the difference between right and wrong, and good and bad, for I had inherited that trait from my ancestor Adam when he ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. In fact, I was a very good child! I was very careful to do all that I was told, but I did not have a handle on what sin was. For knowing that you are a sinner with a black sinful heart, especially when you are a “good person,” really does not happen until you leave your childhood years. It is then when we arrive at the time that we go from childhood to young adulthood that our black heart starts to get exposed to ourselves. Rebellion is the first area where sin usually manifests itself,

because it so often just stays in the heart and grows in the darkness of it. We no longer really wish to please our parents or our teachers as we did when we were younger. We want to experience life for ourselves and try the things that we know are “bad.” We, who still appear outwardly “good,” are now hiding secret sins of rebellion, lust and covetousness, even though we may know better than to actually act upon these new desires. We know we shouldn’t be thinking these things, but we can’t help ourselves.

When I came to this new reality about my heart and its dark secrets around the age of 13-14, it never occurred to me that I needed to turn to God with sorrow that only He could cause me to understand, and then to repent of my sins and receive the atoning sacrifice of Yeshua to give me the blood covering that was required by the Torah. **It never occurred to me, because I had been told that I was already covered!** Do you realize that nowhere in the Bible does it tell us to ask “Jesus into our hearts” or to recite a sinner’s prayer by rote or to “make a decision for Christ?”

So there I was, lost in my sin, yet being deceived myself that I was “okay.” Yet I knew that I had lost my childhood innocence. **Deep in my sinner’s heart, I knew I was not saved! My heart had not been pierced!**

I can remember, as a teenager, reading 1 Corinthians 13 over and over again hoping that I would somehow get peace. You recognize that chapter! It is the one that goes on and on about love, but I did not have the foggiest idea what point Paul was trying to make. You see he was sharing about that *agapē* love that only can be understood by one who has been supernaturally changed from above, and has the Holy Spirit resident inside.

I would read Psalm 100 in the same way. That is the wonderful Psalm of thanksgiving to the Lord. I even had that one memorized, yet I did not really feel thankful to Him.

I would read the “red words” of Yeshua from my Bible, hoping that I would feel like I did as a child again. I knew instinctively that I wasn’t clean, yet the Christians around me told me I was a fine Christian girl.

I am sorry to report that I stayed in such a dreadful state of delusion until I turned 30 years of age. My problem was that, even though I knew I was a sinner, I could not admit it to God. I did not want the relationship with Him that would make me so transparent that I would have to come to the end of Margaret. I did not want Him first in my life, because I was first.

Then I read these verses that cut me to my very unsaved soul from 2 Corinthians 13:5:

“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Yeshua the Messiah is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?”

These verses caused me to feel so sick inside, because I knew that somehow I failed the test that I was in the faith. But God in His infinite mercy, goodness, and grace, intervened with a problem that would shake up my life—and give me the help I needed to repent of my sins and come to Him the way He requires. He had a wonderful plan for my life that would allow me to see

that, no matter what I did, I was now going to have to come to terms with being a failure and a sinner. My late husband, Kim McKee, and I went through the loss of the family business that resulted in us losing everything except our house. I was finally faced with the reality that nothing I could do could fix the problem. I had to finally face the fact that I had put myself first in my life, but I was a failure. I had to face the fact that I had spent my whole life daily breaking the First Commandment: “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. **Your shall have no other gods before Me**” (Exodus 20:2-3).

I was devastated with the reality of this sinner called Margaret who had never truly understood who her God was! All I wanted was to desperately get right with Him! I fell on my face before God and cried out for mercy. I finally realized why I was separated from Him. I didn't know Him and I didn't love Him, even though I thought I knew and believed everything about Him. I got real about Margaret with the God of Israel. I confessed and repented of every secret sin I could think of. **My heart was finally pierced.** I begged Him to cover me with the blood of Yeshua. And finally and miraculously, I knew I had gotten through to my Heavenly Father after all of those years of knowing that we were estranged. His overwhelming presence was felt all over me in such a supernatural way that I would no longer question if I were forgiven or not. **I knew I was forgiven, cleansed, and restored back to God.** I was filled with such love for Him and my brethren that I didn't know existed. I was never to be the same again. I finally understood what grace was. I was finally born again! The love chapter in 1 Corinthians now made sense!

The most amazing part of finally having this assurance of my salvation is that I truly was a changed person. I no longer would walk in self-justification, but I would walk in Divine *agapē* love. I loved others because He first loved me—and I expected nothing in return for loving others. I knew, that in and of myself, I was nothing. It was only He in me that was anything. These words of Paul literally sang to me:

“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” (Colossians 1:26-27).

The Solution

So how do we make sure that we do not fall under the “strong delusion” that God Himself will send to those who did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved? That even though they think they serve Him, their pride and egos give them away.

We go to Him and make sure that we truly have put Him first in our lives—and we get honest about ourselves and our sins! If we are truly born again and walking in the power of His Holy Spirit, than the deception at the End of the Age will not overpower us. We will not believe the lies that will come from the antimessiah and his system. We will thank the Father daily for

choosing us to be part of His end-time restoration of all things. We will cling to Yeshua the Messiah and His atonement for our sins—the good news.

So let us now repeat the verses that warn us about the strong delusion, and then listen to how the Apostle Paul ends this warning with encouragement:

“[A]nd with all the deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie...But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah” (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12, 13-14).

I want to end my testimony with this Scripture that has truly given me that assurance of my own salvation:

“Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more, as you see the day drawing near” (Hebrews 10:22-25)

The day that is being spoken of is the end-times that are steadily approaching us. But right after the author of Hebrews encourages us that we can have the assurance of our salvation, he goes right into warning us that we can still be deceived by the strong delusion in the end, if we do not hold on tight to the truth of salvation:

“For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries” (Hebrews 10:26-27).

So, are we to fall under the strong delusion that God Himself sends in the end-times, because we really have not received salvation and its truth? Are we so often consumed with sharing the Messianic lifestyle, that we have forgotten to share the saving faith that can come only through the Messiah Himself? Or are we to walk in the assurance of our salvation, because we love the truth and have repented Biblically of our sins? And in so doing, are we now sharing faithfully the gospel of salvation through the commandments that we now keep as Messianic Believers? Let us be those people who “keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Yeshua” (Revelation 12:17; 14:12).

And let us share both of these critical truths with others. These are the signs of the true end-time Messianic Believer. This is the gospel according to Torah! It is truly good news that can change your life!

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 a wonderful Challah recipe to make the two loaves for Shavuot as well as a recipe for Corn Fritters!

Honey-Wheat Challah for Shavuot

This recipe is suited to be mixed in a bread machine.

¾ cup lukewarm water
2-¼ tablespoons olive oil
3 tablespoons honey
1 teaspoon sea salt
2 eggs, beaten
2 cups whole wheat bread flour
1 cup unbleached flour
1 packet or 1-¼ teaspoons active dry yeast.

Add ingredients to bread pan in order in which they are listed. Select Dough setting on bread machine. After cycle is complete, remove dough with a rubber spatula. Place dough on floured surface. Separate into 6 equal sections and roll each into 6 same length strips. Make each strip thicker in the middle to give the bread a tapered look. Braid the strips. Let rise for 45 minutes or until doubled in size. Place on greased baking sheet or baking stone. Optional: Brush with beaten egg yolk and sprinkle on sesame seeds. Bake in a preheated oven at 350 degrees for 25-30 minutes. Yield: two small loaves for Shavuot

Corn Fritters

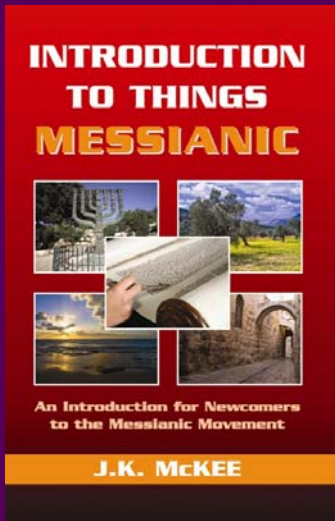
2 ears of corn
1 egg- well beaten
2-tablespoons chopped parsley
¾-cup flour
1-teaspoon baking powder
½-teaspoon salt
¼-teaspoon pepper

Run a knife through each row of raw corn, and then scrape out the pulp. Add the rest of the ingredients and beat well. Drop into hot, vegetable oil or fry on a pancake griddle until golden browned.

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

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