

HEBRAIC ROOTS  
**AN INTRODUCTORY STUDY**



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**William Mark Huey  
J.K. McKee**



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Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard, Updated Edition* (NASU), © 1995, The Lockman Foundation.

**Thus says the LORD,  
“Stand by the ways and see  
and ask for the ancient paths  
where the good way is,  
and walk in it;  
and you will find rest  
for your souls.”**

**Jeremiah 6:16**



# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>1 Why Should We Study Our Hebraic Roots? .....</b>	<b>1</b>
WMH	
<b>2 The Importance of Studying the Torah .....</b>	<b>15</b>
WMH	
<b>3 Why Do We Need the Torah? .....</b>	<b>23</b>
JKM	
<b>4 What Happened at the Jerusalem Council? .....</b>	<b>37</b>
JKM	
<b>5 Why Do We Observe the Seventh-Day Sabbath? .....</b>	<b>43</b>
WMH	
<b>6 Why Do We Celebrate the Biblical Feasts? .....</b>	<b>51</b>
WMH/JKM	
<b>7 Why Do We Eat Biblically Kosher? .....</b>	<b>67</b>
JKM	
<b>8 How Do We Overcome the Hurdles to the Messianic Lifestyle? .....</b>	<b>77</b>
JKM	
<b>9 What About the Name of God?.....</b>	<b>83</b>
JKM	
<b>10 Are Israel and the Church Separate? .....</b>	<b>93</b>
JKM	
<b>11 How Do We Approach the End-Times?.....</b>	<b>101</b>
JKM	
<b>12 Were Are We? Where Are We Going?.....</b>	<b>107</b>
WMH	
<b>Recommended Resources for Biblical Study .....</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>About the Authors.....</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>121</b>

## Abbreviation Chart and Special Terms

The following is a chart of abbreviations for reference works and special terms that are used in publications by TNN Press. Please familiarize yourself with them as the text may reference a Bible version, i.e., RSV for the Revised Standard Version, or a source such as *TWOT* for the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, solely by its abbreviation. Detailed listings of these sources are provided in the Bibliography.

Special terms unique to this publication that may be used have been provided in this chart:

ABD: <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>	LS: <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> (Liddell & Scott)
AMG: <i>Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament</i>	LXX: Septuagint
Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament	m. Mishnah
ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)	MT: Masoretic Text
b. Babylonian Talmud ( <i>Talmud Bavli</i> )	NASB: New American Standard Bible (1977)
B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.	NASU: New American Standard Update (1995)
BDAG: <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)	Nelson: <i>Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words</i>
BDB: <i>Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon</i>	NIDB: <i>New International Dictionary of the Bible</i>
C.E.: Common Era or A.D.	NIV: New International Version (1984)
CGEDNT: <i>Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words</i> (Barclay M. Newman)	NJPS: Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures (1999)
CHALOT: <i>Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>	NKJV: New King James Version (1982)
CJB: Complete Jewish Bible (1998)	NRSV: New Revised Standard Version (1989)
EJ: <i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i>	NLT: New Living Translation (1996)
ESV: English Standard Version (2001)	RSV: Revised Standard Version (1952)
GNT: Greek New Testament	Tanach (Tanakh): the Old Testament
Grk: Greek	Thayer: <i>Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament</i>
HALOT: <i>Hebrew &amp; Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (Koehler and Baumgartner)	TDNT: <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
Heb: Hebrew	TNIV: Today's New International Version (2005)
IDB: <i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>	TWOT: <i>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</i>
ISBE: <i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i>	UBSHNT: United Bible Societies' 1991 Hebrew New Testament revised edition
IVPBBC: <i>IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old &amp; New Testament)</i>	v(s). verse(s)
KJV: King James Version	Vine: <i>Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words</i>
LITV: <i>Literal Translation of the Holy Bible</i> by Jay P. Green (1986)	Vul: Latin Vulgate
	WBC: <i>Word Biblical Commentary</i>
	YLT: Young's Literal Translation (1862/1898)

## Preface to the Edited Edition

*Hebraic Roots: An Introductory Study* has quickly become the most popular publication of TNN Press and Outreach Israel Ministries. Since its initial production, this workbook has been used by the Lord to present many people with an introduction to the Messianic movement and concepts such as Torah observance and Torah study. It has been used in group Bible studies, by small groups, and by individuals on their own who simply want to investigate what the Hebraic Roots of our Biblical faith are all about. The feedback we have received from others has been very encouraging, and has assisted with the production of other materials which address additional critical issues facing the Body of Messiah today.

Any good theological book takes into consideration the feedback of those who read and use it for teaching purposes. This new, updated edition of *Hebraic Roots* has built on the foundational information of the first edition, and has edited the material to make it more user-friendly for those in a Bible study setting, more outside references for those who prefer a scholastic approach to the issues at hand, and perhaps most importantly has taken into account the reality that this workbook may be the *first exposure* that some Christians, both clergy and laity alike, will have to the Messianic movement. This edited edition has been produced with the understanding that some people may hand it to a pastor or Sunday school teacher, who at the very least may be curious, but who also may be critical of Messianic things. As a result, some concepts in the book have been explained more thoroughly for Christian readers, while other concepts have been simplified.

By updating *Hebraic Roots*, it has also been brought to our attention that many of the people who are using this workbook are being used by our Heavenly Father to start Messianic home groups and fellowships, and these new Messianic teachers are unfamiliar with many of the resources and tools that are needed to perform an adequate job expositing on the Scriptures. For these people, and for the curious student who wants to learn more, we have added a short section of recommended research tools near the end of the book. We recognize that God can take a small Bible study and turn it into something more, and want to make sure that we have done our part in properly informing aspiring teachers and students of some of the things they need to accomplish their tasks well.

This updated edition of *Hebraic Roots* also considers the varied and diverse theological trends that have manifested themselves in the independent Messianic movement since its initial publication in 2003. Some of these trends are good, and some of them are not. A few of them are addressed directly or indirectly by us, either in the text or in some of the footnotes. This has been done because questions concerning these issues often do arise in a Bible study environment, or people that are just being exposed to the Messianic movement need to be aware of its theological diversity.

We are deeply indebted to each person who wrote us, commenting on the *Hebraic Roots* workbook, and how it helped them in their understanding of the Messianic movement. May this new edition reflect our desire to help others understand the material easily, but also thoroughly, as we all strive “to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Messiah” (Ephesians 4:13, RSV), and truly attempt to grow in our knowledge and understanding of the God of Israel.

J.K. McKee  
Editor, TNN Online

## Hebraic Roots: An Introductory Study

# Introduction

**H**ebraic Roots: An Introductory Study has been written to be a primer for the emerging number of people who are being drawn to a more comprehensive grasp of the ancient roots of our Biblical faith. As a family that has been active in the Messianic movement since 1995, we came to the unanimous conclusion that a workbook on the subject was needed for the thousands that are being prompted into a pursuit and examination of the Hebraic Roots of the faith, and who want to truly live like those who love the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. An introductory guide to the many issues we have encountered is now available to help the many who are new to this walk.

When our family was first led into the Messianic movement, we initially began fellowshiping at a Messianic Jewish congregation. There we were incredibly blessed by the Lord as the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) began to reveal a more Hebraic perspective on how we could worship, understand, and experience Him more fully. From the very start, we were like dry sponges soaking up the “living water” from the teaching that we were receiving.

We were non-Jewish Believers with only a cursory understanding of Judaism, and were being exposed to a style of worship that in many respects was foreign to what we had been accustomed to as standard, Church going, evangelical Christians. Within weeks, we found ourselves attending the Friday evening and Saturday morning worship services. We were exposed to a Torah scroll, Hebrew liturgy and music, and Davidic dance. We learned what “kosher” was, and how we were not to work on the Sabbath. We learned about the Biblical holidays or *moedim*.<sup>1</sup> Our understanding of what God expected of us was changing, and our weekly routine was being radically altered. For a season, we attended this Messianic congregation while still going to our non-denominational church on Sunday. But after a while we realized that we were not being spiritually fed at Church as we once had been, and that the Father wanted us in the Messianic movement.

One of the first things that really ministered to my wife and me was the worship music. Many times during praise and worship, tears would well up in our eyes as we sensed that we had finally “come home” after a long journey and were at long last where we were supposed to be. It did not matter that we did not fully understand it at the time. We found ourselves singing the Psalms and actual texts of Scripture put to music. Many of the lyrics were in English and Hebrew. We started to learn the language of the Patriarchs through the repetition of songs. Our spirits soared as we sensed a more profound connection with the ancient saints who had gone before us.

We were also introduced to the study of the Torah, or the five Books of Moses (the Pentateuch),<sup>2</sup> on a weekly basis. We began to understand that reviewing the challenges of the Ancient Israelites in a systematic and consistent way enhanced our personal identification with them. After all, these were the forefathers of our faith, and what happened to them in the past adds great dimension and understanding to the whole of the Biblical narrative and our view of the entire Scriptures. It was logical for us to study their lives and analyze how they handled the circumstances of their respective walks. We believed we were finally receiving a long lost foundation to our faith that we had not received in mainstream Christianity, where our Scripture studies primarily focused on the Apostolic Writings (New Testament).

After a few months of attending this Messianic Jewish congregation on a regular basis, we were given the opportunity to become members. After praying about this, my wife and I concluded that the Lord wanted us to participate in the new members class, so we enrolled for the eight-week course. All of us in

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<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew term *moedim* (מוֹעֲדִים) is translated variably as “appointed times” (NASU), “appointed feasts” (NIV), “fixed times” (NJPS), and “appointed festivals” (ATS). *CHALOT* defines the singular *moed* (מוֹעֵד) as “meeting assembly,” and “appointed time, fixed day,” indicating that it is used in the Tanach (Old Testament) for the “tent of meeting” where the elders of Israel met with the Lord (William L. Holladay, ed., [Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 1988], 186).

<sup>2</sup> Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

## Hebraic Roots: An Introductory Study

the new members class were given two books to read: *Growing to Maturity* by Daniel C. Juster and *Our Hands Are Stained With Blood* by Michael L. Brown.

As hungry Believers who wanted to become involved with this congregation, we read through the materials and faithfully attended the new members classes. We were learning so much about the Jewish Roots of our faith that we really did not have the time to thoroughly analyze all of the material being presented. *Growing to Maturity*, for example, was written primarily as a tool for training new Jewish Believers in the faith. For the most part, we found the book to be very enlightening on a number of subjects, but also found ourselves a bit separated. Michael Brown's book was a lengthy exposition, as its subtitle suggests, of the "tragic story of the Church and the Jewish People." As a family that valued history, this book helped fill in some of the gaps in our thinking about varied aspects of the historical Church. With these two books as our primers to understand the Messianic movement, we began our journey with a commitment to this Messianic Jewish congregation.

Both of these books did an admirable job of igniting our family's interest in the Hebraic Roots of our faith. For the first time in our spiritual journey, we were beginning to look at the history of the faith through an Hebraic lens with a Torah foundation. As we progressed in those years, we were exposed to more resources that helped us search out the origins of our faith, and how the first Believers in Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) actually lived. We spent a substantial amount of time analyzing the culture and times in which the First Century Disciples and Apostles lived, and how they approached their relationship with the God of Israel. We discovered some very basic things that had not necessarily been taught to us in Church settings.

For centuries, much of the teaching about the practices of the early followers of Yeshua had been altered because of the forces of history, and the transfer of the center of authority from Jerusalem to Rome in the early centuries of Christianity. With the Jewish revolt against Rome in 67 C.E. and subsequent destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 C.E., anti-Semitism arose in the Roman Empire. Over time, the early Jewish leadership of the *ekklēsia*<sup>3</sup> died out and was replaced by non-Jews, many of whom had no understanding of Judaism, and were instead trained in Hellenistic or Greek philosophy. Interpretations of the writings of the Apostles were no longer rooted in the Tanach (Old Testament), but were often based in the reason and logic of Plato and Aristotle. These things gave ultimate rise to the Roman Catholic Church. Its overwhelming influence on Western Civilization significantly changed the ancient ways of the Jewish Apostles. When the Protestant Reformation arose in Europe, Catholicism had so dominated Christian thinking that the Reformers could only go so far in their pursuit of the truth, because they often had no understanding or background knowledge of the First Century Judaism in which Yeshua and His followers lived.

The Holy One in His sovereignty allowed the Protestant Reformers to alter the Catholic approach to the faith. *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture Only) and *Sola Fide* (Faith Alone) became battle cries for the faithful who were finally concluding that they could personally approach God for the forgiveness of their sins and justification without going through a priest. Men and women did not have to pay indulgences to receive salvation, as it was available freely through the sacrifice of Yeshua. But because the early Reformers were principally former Catholics, they could only do so much and there were limitations. There was still anti-Semitism in the Church, though reformed. It was obviously not the time for the final restoration back to the original practices of the First Century saints to occur.

Surprisingly, it was not until the Enlightenment of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries with the emancipation of Jews in Europe that reasonable Jewish-Christian dialogue would begin occurring for Christian theologians to start to understand what a rich heritage we have in Judaism. Hebraic studies, not

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<sup>3</sup> The Greek word *ekklēsia* (ἐκκλησία) is most often rendered as "church" in our English Bibles, but more accurately means "congregation" or "assembly." In the Hebrew Scriptures, the word *qahal* (קהל) is frequently used for "convocation, assembly" (*CHALOT*, 314). *Qahal* usually "is translated as *ekklēsia* in the LXX" (Jack P. Lewis, "qāhāl," in R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1980], 2790), the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. Whenever the Apostolic writers use the word *ekklēsia*, they use it with the understanding that it is referring to the assembly of Israel, not a separate and disconnected "Church."

only in the Hebrew language, but also in Rabbinics and in Jewish hermeneutics of examining the Scriptures, began being explored by Christians, and many now can truly see the Messiah for who He is in all of the pages of the Bible.

Today, after almost 500 years since the start of the Protestant Reformation, we see a new reformation taking place among followers of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It began with the rise of the Messianic Jewish movement in the mid-Twentieth Century. We are very grateful for the Messianic Jews that the Father has used in the past fifty years to take the faithful from the days of the Reformation to the prophesied end-time period of the “restoration of all things” (Acts 3:21), attested to by Peter when the Holy Spirit was poured out on those assembled at *Shavuot*.<sup>4</sup> This movement has expanded substantially to include more than just Jewish people.

Since the late 1960s, Messianic Jewish congregations have been responsible for much of what is happening today as the Messianic movement grows in significant numbers. They have been planted all over North America and the world, largely as outreaches to evangelize the Jewish community with the gospel. Many Jewish followers of the Messiah Yeshua have endured considerable persecution and have often been ostracized by their physical Jewish brethren because of their faith, and in spite of this they have remained constant.

However, even though Messianic Judaism began as an evangelical outreach of Jewish Believers to fellow Jews, today it is important to understand that many Messianic Jewish congregations now have an increasing number of non-Jewish Believers. Over the years, as Messianic Judaism has grown and matured, many changes have occurred. The demographic profile has changed, as non-Jewish Believers have been investigating their Hebraic Roots and entering into the Messianic community. At many Messianic Jewish congregations, the actual Jewish population of some of these congregations is less than twenty percent. In some extreme cases, there are only a mere handful of Jews.

Is this only a coincidence? Or is it a sign from the Holy One that He is indeed returning us *all* back to the faith practices of the original Disciples of Yeshua? Obviously, this occurrence begs many important questions that will be asked in the coming years, and examined in further studies. For the first time since the First Century, we are witnessing Jews and non-Jews coming together in the unity of the Messiah Yeshua and worshipping Him in a way that is reminiscent of the early Believers. This transformation is not without its issues, both spiritual and theological. But today, we are discovering many people who are hungry for more information about the Hebraic Roots of their faith, and they are not afraid to change. **Are you one of these people?**

In our years of pursuing the Holy One of Israel upon entering the Messianic community of faith, we had never come across a book that could be used for basic instruction about many of the areas of life that often take a radical course change as the Messianic lifestyle is embraced. We could never find a publication that laid out in simplistic terms to the Christian layman or simple enquirer what the Hebraic Roots of our faith are all about, and what is happening at the grassroots level among many Believers today. With *Hebraic Roots: An Introductory Study*—we have been led to put to paper our thoughts about a variety of topics that will inevitably be considered as you begin your walk with the Messiah of Israel as a Messianic Believer.

*Hebraic Roots* has been compiled with elementary information about the Messianic movement. Those coming into this understanding and who follow this study have a basic primer for proper instruction. This workbook has been arranged as an easy 12-week study, which you can use in a Bible study setting with other people, or as a personal study for yourself. Some may prefer to go faster, others may prefer to go slower, but however you read the material and examine the Scriptures, you will be challenged. When you complete this study, we guarantee that you will have much to think and pray about!

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<sup>4</sup> The Hebrew word *Shavuot* (שבועות) literally means “weeks,” and is the last of the Spring festivals of Leviticus 23, where the Israelites were commanded to count seven weeks plus one day from Passover, and make special offerings and sacrifices to the Lord (vs. 16-22). According to Jewish tradition, *Shavuot* was the same time when Moses received the Ten Commandments from God. Most Christians know *Shavuot* by its Greek-derived name of *Pentēkostē* (πεντηκοστή) or “Pentecost,” meaning “fiftieth.”

## Hebraic Roots: An Introductory Study

This workbook examines a number of areas for study and discussion. It is designed to be a study guide that will prompt questions for personal reflection or group discussion. In this publication you will be given answers to the following questions:

- Why should we study our Hebraic Roots?
- Why do we need the Torah?
- What happened at the Jerusalem Council?
- Why do we observe the seventh-day Sabbath?
- Why do we celebrate the Biblical festivals?
- Why do we eat Biblically kosher?
- How do we overcome the hurdles to the Messianic lifestyle?
- What about the Name of God?
- Are Israel and the Church separate?
- How do we approach the end-times?

We trust that as these questions are fairly, and above all lovingly answered, that you will want to further embrace the Messianic lifestyle. We trust that you will recognize that you need to prepare yourself, your family, and in the process posterity, for the return of the Messiah Himself. The end-time saints will both believe in Yeshua, and be keeping the Father's commandments (Revelation 12:17; 14:12).

We understand as a family that the narrow path toward a Messianic lifestyle has a number of challenges along the way. The departure from mainstream Christianity, and/or one's Jewish brothers and sisters who do not believe in Yeshua, creates a number of roadblocks and stumbling stones. Many do not understand what this is all about. Given time and patience and longsuffering, and the study and examination that is required of all of us as Believers, if we are truly in the will of God and we demonstrate being transformed more and more into His likeness, those around us will have no choice but to ask: "Why?"

We remember how useful books have been in our pursuit of truth. Our prayer is that *Hebraic Roots: An Introductory Study* will give you just enough information so that you will want more. You will discover that you are being drawn back to the origins of our faith. You will feel connected to Israel. You will begin to understand the greater blessings of knowing Yeshua as the Messiah of Israel and obeying His commandments.

*William Mark Huey*  
*Director, Outreach Israel Ministries*



## Why Should We Study Our Hebraic Roots? WMH

**A**round the world there is an incredible move of the Holy Spirit that has attracted many Believers desiring to grow in their relationship with God. It does not matter if you call this move of the Holy Spirit the Hebraic Roots movement or the Messianic movement or some other description. There is no doubt that increasing numbers of Believers in the Messiah Yeshua (Christ Jesus), who worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are studying more and more about the Hebraic Roots of their faith. Something is happening among people as the Bible is being reexamined to dig for ancient truths that have often been overlooked by the masses of Christianity. Thousands are being encouraged to return to the foundations of our faith in the Tanach (Old Testament), and it is deepening their walk and commitment to the Lord.

Probably one of the first questions that comes to mind when one begins to pursue the Hebraic Roots of our faith is: **Why should we study our Hebraic Roots?** There are a number of excellent reasons to study the Hebraic Roots of our faith. In this chapter we address some of the obvious reasons, such as:

1. The Patriarchs or fathers of our faith were called Hebrews or *Ivrim* (עִבְרִים). Abraham was considered a “Hebrew” (Genesis 14:13). The other Patriarchs throughout the Scriptures are likewise referred to as Hebrews (Joseph, Moses, Jonah, David, Paul).<sup>1</sup> By understanding what it means to be a Hebrew, we will be better prepared to walk in a like manner spiritually.
2. Almost two thirds of the Bible, the Tanach or Old Testament, Genesis to Malachi, is written in Hebrew. The Holy One of Israel entrusted the oracles of God to the Jewish people (Romans 3:2). An understanding of Biblical Hebrew and the full definitions of Hebrew words is important to how we view the Scriptures and theology.
3. Yeshua (Jesus), the Messiah of Israel, was Jewish and raised in a culture that was Torah observant, meaning that it adhered to the Law of Moses. Since we are being conformed to Yeshua’s image (Romans 8:29), we must understand how He was obedient to the Father’s commands.
4. The First Century Disciples and Apostles were Torah observant just like their Master. They walked in a manner consistent with Yeshua, and the Apostolic Scriptures (New Testament) reflect this walk.
5. The Apostle Paul, author of almost half of the New Testament, was a Pharisee and a Jewish scholar trained by Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Paul’s personal theology and letters are deeply rooted in his Torah observance and Pharisaical training.

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph: Genesis 39:14, 17; 41:12; Moses: Exodus 2:7, 11; Jonah: Jonah 1:9; David: 1 Samuel 29:3; Paul: 2 Corinthians 11:22; Philippians 3:5.