



The Center for  
Messianic Learning  
Unapologetically Pro-Torah  
Unashamedly Pro-Israel  
Irrevocably Zionist

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“... out of Tziyon will go  
forth Torah, the word of  
ADONAI from  
Yerushalayim.”  
(Isaiah 2:3)

*Jew and Gentile (Synagogue and Church), one in Messiah. (Ephesians 2:14)*

*“For He is our peace, Who made both one, and broke down the middle wall of partition, ...”*

Baruch atah Adonai Elochenu, Melech ha-olam, Who has made His everlasting covenant with His servant Yisrael: “I will bless those who bless you, but I will curse anyone who curses you; and by you all the families of the earth will be blessed. ... May peoples serve you and nations bow down to you. May you be lord over your kinsmen, let your mother’s descendants bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be everyone who blesses you!” — Genesis 12:3; 27:29, The Complete Jewish Bible

*If your life is not in danger because of what you believe, maybe you’re on the wrong side.*

## What I Believe

### A Summary of My Doctrinal Position I stand by these basic Biblical truths

- I believe in only one true and living God as declared in the Sh’ma (Deuteronomy 6:4), Who is Echad (one, a compound unity), and Who eternally and simultaneously and distinctly exists as God the Father (Abba), God the Son (HaBen Yeshua), and God the Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh) (Isaiah 48:16-17, Genesis 1:1-2, Exodus 3:6, Proverbs 30:4, Ephesians 4:4-6).
- I believe in Messiah Yeshua’s deity (Isaiah 9:6, John 1:1-4,10-14), His virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14), His sinless life, His atoning death (Isaiah 53, Psalm 22), His bodily resurrection, His ascension, and His future return in power and glory to rule the world from the throne of his ancestor David.
- I believe that the whole Bible — consisting of both the TaNaKh (so-called “Hebrew Scriptures”) and the Ketuvei HaShalichim (Apostolic Scriptures) — is the one and only inspired, infallible, and authoritative Word of God (Psalm 119:89, Proverbs 30:56, 2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- I believe in God’s eternal covenant with Avraham, Yitzhak (Isaac), and Ya’akov (Jacob), and with Ya’akov’s descendants forever. I therefore unconditionally stand with and support the Jewish people and the State of Israel, and hold fast to the Biblical heritage of our forefathers.
- I further believe that the Messianic Restoration Movement is the beginning of the fulfillment of the Biblical prophecies concerning the Restoration of Israel that will be completely fulfilled in the Messianic Age, when HaMelech Yeshua HaMashiach will reign physically on earth from His throne in Jerusalem, and that it is also the beginning of the fulfillment of the prophecies in Zechariah chapters 6 and 9 concerning the Gentiles who will worship alongside the Jews in the Temple of HaShem (see especially 8:20-23), which will also be completely fulfilled in the Messianic Age.

## About the Bible

I believe that the whole Bible is a single unit, consisting of both the TaNaKh (an acronym for Torah [Divine Instruction], Nevi'im [Prophets], K'tuvim [Writings]) and the Ketuvei HaShalichim (Apostolic Writings), and that it is the one and only inspired, infallible, and authoritative Word of God (Psalm 119:89, Proverbs 30:5-6, 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Furthermore, I believe that to divide the Sacred Text into two “books” or “testaments” is error, and that the writings of the Shliachim should rightfully be included as an integral part of the K'tuvim. I object to the use of the terms “Old” and “New” Testament or Covenant, in that the word “old” suggests that which is obsolete or of less importance that it originally was, and the word “new” suggests that which supplants or has replaced something “old.”

I believe that the original autographs — those originally hand-written by the Shliachim (Apostles) and Nevi'im (Prophets) — are the literal written Word of HaShem, absolutely inerrant and infallible in relation to any subject with which they deal, and the Bible so defined is the only infallible and authoritative word of HaShem.

I believe in the verbal (all the words of the Bible) and plenary (all the parts of the Bible) inspiration, dual authorship, and protected transmission of all Scripture, so that in the Bible is to be found the full and sufficient source of all divine revelation. Therefore, no other writings, “prophecies,” or other supposed revelations are to be accepted as divinely inspired or authoritative. All teachings and all knowledge, whatever the source, are to be understood and interpreted in the light of the sacred Scriptures.

I believe that the Bible is to be properly interpreted only through the enlightenment of Ruach HaKodesh (the Holy Spirit) and is to be understood in its literal, natural, historical, grammatical, and intended sense; that in order to be correctly understood and interpreted, it must be understood and interpreted from the perspective of its original

recipients; that since the original recipients of the Sacred Text were Jews living within Tabernacle/Temple/Synagogue milieu, it can be only correctly interpreted when viewed from the perspective of Tabernacle/Temple/Synagogue Judaism as it existed from the Exodus through the dispersal following the destruction of the Second Temple; and that it is to be accepted as the full and final authority over the Believer's faith and conduct, including all matters of congregational polity, policy, and procedure (Deut. 6:4-9; Prov. 3:1-6; Ps. 119:89, 105; Isa. 48:12-16; Rom. 8:14-17; II Tim. 2:15, 3:16-17)

## Torah

I hold that the Creator has one, and only one, standard of righteousness, the Torah, by which the conduct of all humankind will be judged. Though God progressively revealed His will to mankind from Gan Eden to the end of the Apostolic Age (i.e., the death of Shliach Yochanan, ca 90 C.E.), I believe that He has now, and has always had, only one Torah (divine instruction) (Exodus 24:4) for all people of all time, and that it is the singular standard of righteousness by which all mankind will be judged. ADONAI and His Word are eternal. That is: He, His Word, and His Will have always been, and will always be, the same. (Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8; Matthew 5:18; 24:35; John 1:1-3,14)

I believe the Scriptures when they say that Moshe Rabbeinu “wrote down all the words of Adonai” (Exodus 24:4). I therefore believe that the writings of the Sages (Talmud, Mishnah, Midrash Rabbah), while valuable for our understanding and application of the Torah to our daily walk, do not constitute a “Second Torah” or “Oral Torah,” and that they were not divinely inspired but rather are the product of men and represent the “case law” of Jewish religious jurisprudence; therefore, they do not have the authority of Torah (Proverbs 30:6, Deuteronomy 12:32).

The habit of English-speaking Bible scholars to translate the Hebrew word “torah” (תּוֹרָה) as “law” is indeed unfortunate.

Even though the Torah does contain both civil and ecclesiastical laws for the Commonwealth of Israel, the true concept of “Torah” is much closer to “Divine Instruction” rather than “Law.”

When the LXX (Septuagint, an early Greek translation of the Tanakh) was being translated, the closest Greek word that the sages could find to the Hebrew concept was *nomos* (νόμος), which translates into English most closely as “law,” which to the English-speaking mind means dictatorial mandates rather than loving instruction that a Father gives his children for their benefit.

The term “Torah” may refer to either the Five Books of Moses (also known as the Pentateuch), the entire TaNaKh (Hebrew Scriptures), or the whole Bible (including the Ketuvei HaShalichim), depending on usage.

My use of the word “Torah” never refers to the “Oral Tradition” or “Oral Torah” (Talmud, Mishnah, Midrash Rabbah), but while I do not consider the Talmud or any other commentary on the Scriptures as the Word of God, I believe that the writings of Oral Tradition contain further insight into the character of God and His dealings with His people.

In the Diaspora we do not practice those parts of Torah which require residence in the land, a theocratic civil government, and/or a consecrated Temple on Mount Moriah.

I disagree with those who teach that obedience to Torah is required only for ethnic Jews, and I believe that HaShem has but one Standard of Righteousness by which every member of the human race will be judged — His Torah. I believe that the Torah constitutes the “Constitution” of the Commonwealth of Israel now, in the Kingdome Age, and in the World to Come. I believe that the privileges and responsibilities of that Constitution apply to all citizens, whether natural-born or naturalized. I therefore believe that obedience to Torah, to the extent that obedience is possible, is incumbent upon all believers in Messiah, including “the Gentile Church.”

## Ketuvei HaShalichim

I believe that the Ketuvei HaShalichim (Apostolic Writings, commonly and erroneously referred to as the “New Testament”) were inspired by Ruach HaKodesh (see immediately above), written under the direction of Ruach HaKodesh by Torah-observant Jews, in the Jewish language (Hebrew and/or Aramaic), and were originally directed to an almost-exclusively Jewish audience. I believe that they were then translated into Koine (Common) Greek for transmission to the non-Jewish and Hellenized (Greek-speaking) Jewish Messianic Believers in the Diaspora, along with their Gentile converts to HaDerek (The Way), and that much of the error in modern translation and interpretation comes from the attempt to understand the Apostolic Writings with a Greek (or Western) mindset and ignore the clearly Hebraic (Eastern) nature of the original text. In order to correctly understand them, I must therefore interpret them from the perspective of the first-century Jewish audience to whom they were originally written.

## About God

“Shema Yisrael, ADONAI Eloheinu, ADONAI echad — Hear, Israel, ADONAI is our God, ADONAI is one.”

I believe in one, and *only* one, true and living God as declared in the Sh’ma (Deuteronomy 6:4), Who is Echad (one, a compound unity), an indivisible, infinite, and intelligent Spirit Who is the source of all being and meaning, and Who eternally, simultaneously, and distinctly (but inseparably) exists as God the Father (HaAv or Abba), God the Son (Ha-Ben Yeshua), and God the Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh), one in essence and attributes, yet three in distinct “Person,” work, and purpose; each of Whom possess all the attributes of absolute Deity and is indivisible, infinite, eternal, unchangeable, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, personal, and perfect in wisdom, power, holiness, righteousness, justice, goodness, truth, mercy, and love (Isaiah

43:10-11; Isaiah 48:16-17, Genesis 1:1-2, Exodus 3:6, Proverbs 30:4, Ephesians 4:4-6).

He is the Creator of heaven and earth, of all living beings, and of everything both visible and invisible (Genesis 1:1-31, Colossians 1:15-17). He exists outside of the physical universe that He created and is thus not bound by any of the physical laws of time and space that He created; thus, there is nothing within His creation to which He may be accurately compared. His true nature is thus far beyond the ability of the mind of man to adequately or accurately comprehend. Although He is limitless in power, authority, time, matter, and space, He has chosen, in His infinite wisdom, to reveal His nature to humanity in perceivable and comprehensible manners.

Scripture records HaShem as revealing Himself in the following physical manifestations, as well as others: He walked with our first parents in Gan Eden in the cool of the day (Genesis 3:8); as fire He declared the covenant with Avraham when He passed between the two halves of the sacrifice (Genesis 15:17); as the form of a man not born of a woman He approached Avraham with the two angels (Genesis 18); as a burning bush He spoke to Moshe (Exodus 3:2); as the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire He led the children of Israel through the wilderness (Exodus 13:21-22, et al); as the Sh'khinah He inhabited the Tabernacle and the Temple (Exodus 40:34-35, 2Chronicles 5:11-14); He appeared in Babylon as the fourth Man in the furnace (Daniel 3:25); as the promised Messiah He became a Man made of flesh and born of a woman (Isaiah 7:14, Galatians 4:4; John 1:1-3,14).

Although there are numerous examples of HaShem revealing Himself to humanity in various ways and forms, of all those many ways and forms, He has chosen to refer to Himself in the following primary contexts: as

the Father (HaAv), as the Son (HaBen) Yeshua, and as Ruach HaKodesh (the Holy Spirit/Breath).

What makes these primary contexts important is not only the fact that HaShem used these forms to reveal Himself to humanity, but in doing so, He refers to Himself in these primary contexts as the one and only true and living HaShem.

I therefore believe that Abba is all the fullness of HaShem invisible (John 1:18); that HaBen is all the fullness of HaShem manifested (John 1:14-18)<sup>1</sup>; and that Ruach HaKodesh is all the fullness of HaShem acting immediately upon the creature (1Corinthians 2:9-10).<sup>2</sup>

That HaShem refers to Himself in these three primary contexts can in no way can be said to imply that there are three separate and distinct Gods, as Scripture makes it abundantly clear that there is but one, and only one, true and living HaShem.

HaShem and His Word are eternal and unchangeable. That is to say that He, His Will, and His Word have always been, and will always be, the same (Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8; Matthew 5:18; 24:35; John 1:1-3,14).

The human mind has absolutely no frame of reference by which to understand an infinite God. So by referring to HaShem as three Divine "Persons" (*not* three different Gods or three different individuals) I provide ourselves with a tool with which to be better able to understand the various ways that the Scriptures describe His working out His plan for His creation, and to understand the relationships within HaShem Himself as HaAv, HaBen, and Ruach HaKodesh.

For example: Yeshua declared that no man has seen HaShem at any time except as the Son has revealed Him; Yeshua declared that He always did the work of His Father; Yeshua declared that only the Father knows the time

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<sup>1</sup> That is, HaBen is HaShem made physically manifest in any form. Thus, with the exceptions of the dove form in which Ruach HaKodesh was manifest at Yeshua's immersion (Luke 3:22, et al) and the tongues of fire at Pentecost (Acts 2:3), any and all physical manifestations of HaShem are in the "Person" of HaBen.

<sup>2</sup> Paraphrased from Boardman, cited in *Great Doctrines of the Bible* by William Evans. Chicago: Moody Press, 1912, 1949, p. 28.

of the Son's return to earth; Yeshua said that after His departure He would send Ruach HaKodesh as the Comforter; in another place Yeshua said that after His departure His Father would send Ruach HaKodesh; the Son is said to be seated in the heavenlies at the right hand of the Father; in preparation for His earthly priesthood, Yeshua was immersed while the Father declared Him to be the Son and Ruach HaKodesh descended upon Him in the form of a dove. (Other examples will be provided in the in-depth discussions to follow).

As to the "office work" of HaShem, HaAv decrees the will of HaShem, HaBen declares the will of HaShem, and Ruach HaKodesh implements the will of HaShem.

## About the Messiah

I believe that Yeshua HaMashiach of Natzeret (erroneously referred to by Gentile Christianity as "Jesus") is the second "Person" of HaShem, eternally existing as HaBen (the Son), Who always has been and always will be fully God, possessing all the attributes of absolute Deity, infinite, eternal, unchangeable, indivisible, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, personal, and perfect in wisdom, power, holiness, righteousness, justice, goodness, truth, mercy, and love. I believe that He is just as much God as though He had never become man, and just as much man as though He had never been God. I believe that He created, upholds, and sustains the entire universe solely through the power of His sovereign will (Colossians 1:15-17). I believe that as a man, he temporarily set aside some of the prerogatives, but none of the attributes, of His deity.

I believe that all visible manifestations of HaShem to man, whether in the Tanakh or in the Ketuvei HaShalichim (with the exceptions of the appearance of Ruach HaKodesh as a

dove at Messiah's mikvah and as fire on Pentecost), are in the Person of HaBen. We are therefore convinced that it was HaShem the Son (HaBen) Who walked in the Garden with Adam and Eve, Who appeared to and made the covenants with the Patriarchs, Who went ahead of Israel in smoke and fire in the wilderness, Who wrote the Mitzvot in stone with His own finger atop Mount Sinai, and to Whom the prayers and adoration of His Chosen People have been unknowingly directed since He first appeared to Avraham over 4,000 years ago.

He is the Messiah of Israel, the Savior of the world, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords. He is Adonai (HaShem) who appeared among mankind in the flesh, and now is glorified with all power in Heaven and in Earth, at the right hand of Abba. (John 1:1,2,14; Acts 7:55-56; Hebrews 10:12)

He is the ultimate and final sacrifice required for the removal of sins. He was born of a virgin, was sinless, performed miracles, died an atoning death by execution on a Roman cross (*stagon*)<sup>3</sup>, and rose from the dead three days afterward. Everyone who believes this message, repents of their sins, trusts that Yeshua is the Messiah, and relies totally upon His finished work of redemption are forgiven their sins and come into a renewed covenant with Adonai through Him. They have therefore become full citizens of the Commonwealth of Israel, and coinheritors of all the promises Adonai made with Avraham, Yitzhak, and Ya'akov. (John 1:29; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7; Matthew 1; Hebrews 2:4; 4:15; Leviticus 17:11; Isaiah 53; Psalms 22; Romans 5:6-11; Ephesians 2:8; Matthew 27:50-28:20; Romans 10:9-12; 1 Corinthians 5-7)

I believe that without in any way ceasing to be fully God, He became also fully man, taking upon himself all the human attributes except the sin nature. I believe that he was conceived of Ruach HaKodesh, born of the

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<sup>3</sup> Within Messianic Judaism there is considerable debate as to the form of the instrument upon which Yeshua was executed. We happen to believe that the instrument was in the form of the traditional Roman cross with a cross-beam, but as historians claim that

the Romans used various forms of crosses, we view this as a matter of opinion rather than of doctrine. We find no fault with those who prefer the term "execution stake" as less offensive to Jewish persons.

virgin Miriam, lived a perfect and sinless life, and accomplished our redemption through his death as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice, and that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. I believe in His literal and bodily resurrection and ascension, and that now glorified He sits at the right hand of Abba where He carries out His ministry as Kohen HaGadol (the Eternal High Priest) of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate on our behalf. I believe in His literal, bodily return to reign physically on the earth for a thousand years, and in His ultimate judgment over the living and the dead.

## About Ruach HaKodesh

Ruach HaKodesh [not *the* Ruach HaKodesh, which would be “*the* the Holy Spirit”] is a divine Person, possessing all of the attributes of Deity, and is infinite, eternal, unchangeable, indivisible, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, personal, and perfect in wisdom, power, holiness, righteousness, justice, goodness, truth, mercy, and love (Isaiah 43:10-11; Isaiah 48:16-17, Genesis 1:1-2, Exodus 3:6, Proverbs 30:4, Ephesians 4:4-6). He convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He is fully God, and is therefore coequal to and coeternal with Abba and HaBen.

With both Abba and HaBen, He was an active Agent in the creation, and He is the supernatural Agent in regeneration and sanctification, immersing all believers into the Body of Mashiach (the Miqra, or Holy Community), equally and permanently indwelling every believer, and sealing them unto the day of redemption. He is the Divine Teacher, Who inspired and superintended the writing of all Scripture, Who illuminates the interpretation of Scripture, and Who guides believers into all truth, assisting Believers to understand and appropriate the Scriptures. It is the privilege and duty of all true Believers in Mashiach to be filled with and controlled by Ruach HaKodesh.

Most of the “pseudo-Christian” cults — as well as many who call themselves “Christian”

or “Messianic” — deny the deity, the individuality, and even the personality of Ruach HaKodesh, teaching that He has no mind, no volition, and is certainly not God, but rather only an impersonal force, like the wind, or (at best) like the Force of the George Lucas “Star Wars” stories. Still others teach that He is but one of the “avatars” or a “projection” of HaShem.

Ruach HaKodesh has the attributes of personality: intelligence, will, and emotions.

First, **Ruach HaKodesh has intelligence:**

For the Spirit probes all things, even the profoundest depths of God. For who knows the inner workings of a person except the person’s own spirit inside him? So too no one knows the inner workings of God except God’s Spirit. (1 Corinthians 2:11-12, CJB.)

Then Kefa said, “Why has the Adversary so filled you heart that you lie to Ruach HaKodesh and keep back some of the money you received for the land? ... You have lied not to human beings but to God!” (Acts 5:3-4, CJB)

It is only possible to lie to a person, not to an impersonal force or a “projection.” How can one lie to the wind or a radio transmission? And Kefa (Peter), under the inspiration of Ruach HaKodesh, says that when Hananyah lied to Ruach HaKodesh he was lying to God; thus, it is clear that Ruach HaKodesh is God.

**Ruach HaKodesh has will/volition:** Note that Scripture uses the personal pronoun: He, not it!

One and the same Spirit is at work in all these things, distribution to each person as He chooses. (1Corinthians 12:11, CJB)

**Ruach HaKodesh has feelings/emotions:** Again, note the use of the personal pronoun Whom, not Which!

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by Whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30, NAS)

**Ruach HaKodesh is God the Creator:** In the Tanakh, the words “breath” and “Spirit” are two different translations of exactly the same word: *ruach*. Of the 348 times *ruach* appears in the Tanakh, it is translated 321 times as “spirit” and only 27 times as “breath.”

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was unformed and void, darkness was on the face of the deep, and the Spirit [*Ruach*] of God hovered over the surface of the water. (Genesis 1:1-2, CJB)

By the word of ADONAI the heavens were made, and their whole host by a breath [*ruach*] of His mouth. (Psalm 33:6, CJB)

If you send out your breath [*ruach*], they are created, and you renew the face of the earth. (Psalm 104:30, CJB)

## About Spirit Beings

I believe that angels are created beings, not deity, and are not to be worshipped; that they were created by HaShem to serve and worship Him; that they are organized into different ranks and orders; and that there are now both holy and fallen angels.

I believe that holy angels are “ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation” (Hebrews 1:14). They ministered extensively to Yeshua during His earthly life and ministry, and are involved in a general ministry to believers. Toward unbelievers, angels announce impending judgments, and will be actively involved in the judgments of the time of Ya'akov's Trouble (the “Great Tribulation”).

I believe that HaSatan is also an angel, a cherub of the highest rank of all angelic creatures, that he sinned through the pride of self-will, and thereby became the author of sin and the cause of the fall of man. He is the

open and declared enemy of both HaShem and man, and with his fallen angels (demons) is in a state of present and open warfare against HaShem and His saints. Some of the demons are presently being held captive “in chains” in Sheol. They will all be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire, which was created specifically for HaSatan and his demons.

## Names for Spirit Beings

There are at least three classes of spirit beings described in Scripture: cherubim, seraphim, and angels. Other primary names for spirit beings include principalities and powers. Spirit beings are referred to in Scripture by many names, among which the following are included:

- powers/powers of heaven (Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:25; Luke 21:26; Romans 8:38; Ephesians 6:12; 1Peter 3:22)
- principalities (Romans 8:38)
- authorities (1Peter 3:22)
- spiritual forces of wickedness (Ephesians 6:12)
- ministering spirits (Hebrews 1:14)
- angels — The Hebrew and Greek words translated as “angels” occur a total 389 times in Scripture (all word counts in this article are from the New American Standard Bible), but not always referring to spirit beings.

The Hebrew word *Mal'ak* means a messenger or representative, and appears 213 times. It is translated as angel (101 times), angels (9), messengers (76), messenger (24), ambassadors (2), and envoys (1).

The Greek word *Angelos* means a messenger, envoy, one who is sent, an angel, or a messenger from HaShem. It appears 176 times, and is translated as angel (86 times), angels (80), angel's (2), angelic (1), messenger (4), and messengers (3).

## Cherub

The Hebrew word כְּרוּב *kherub* (pl. *kherubim*) appears 20 times in the NASB as cherub (pl. cherubim), and is used to denote (a) the

guardians of Eden; (b) beings who are flanking HaShem's throne; (c) the forms hovering over the Ark of the Covenant; and (d) figuratively, as the chariot of HaShem (Psalm 18:10).

The prophet Yechezk'el (Ezekiel) provides us with a detailed description of the *kherubim*:

The cherubim appeared to have the form of a man's hand under their wings. Then I looked, and behold, four wheels beside the cherubim, one wheel beside each cherub; and the appearance of the wheels {was} like the gleam of a Tarshish stone. As for their appearance, all four of them had the same likeness, as if one wheel were within another wheel. When they moved, they went in {any of} their four directions without turning as they went; but they followed in the direction which they faced, without turning as they went. Their whole body, their backs, their hands, their wings and the wheels were full of eyes all around, the wheels belonging to all four of them. The wheels were called in my hearing, the whirling wheels. And each one had four faces. The first face {was} the face of a cherub, the second face {was} the face of a man, the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle. (Ezekiel 10:4-14)

## Seraph

The Hebrew word שרף *saraph* (pl. *saraphim*) appears only in the writings of the prophet Yesha'yahu (Isaiah), and is closely related to the word used to describe the "fiery serpent" that Moshe had made in the wilderness (Numbers 21:6-8). He provides us with the following description (Isaiah 6:1-5):

In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet,

and with two he flew. And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory." And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke.

## Demon

The Hebrew word שד *shed* appears only twice in the Tanakh, whereas the Greek word daimonion *daimonion* (evil spirits, or the messengers and ministers of HaSatan) appears in the Apostolic Writings 63 times, plus variations *daimon daimon* (demon 1); *daimonizomai daimonizomai* (demon-possessed 11, demoniacs 2); *daimoniode?daimoniodes* (demonic 1). All the false gods of all of the religions of the world (Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Jainism, Shintoism, Taoism, and Zoroastrianism, to name but a few) are actually demons pretending to be gods.

## Names of Spirit Beings

Other than HaShem, there are only three spirit beings who are specifically named in the Scriptures: Mikha'el (Michael), Gavri'el (Gabriel), and (perhaps) Heylel (Lucifer) whose title (not name) is HaSatan (the accuser).

**Mikha'el** (Who is Like God) is an "Archangel," the Sar Ri'shown (chief prince) of HaShem's heavenly army, the great prince who stands guard over the people of Israel. (See Daniel 10:13; 10:21; 12:1; Jude 1:9; Revelation 12:7)

**Gavri'el** (Warrior of God), is also an archangel, the angel HaShem uses to send messages of great importance to man. He was sent to Daniel, to Zacharias, and to Mariam, the mother of Yeshua. (See Daniel 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19; 1:26)

**Heylel** (Light Bringer or Light Bearer) is also known as Shining One, Morning Star, and Lucifer (in KJV). He is also called Beelzebul (Lord of the House, Beelzebub in KJV) seven times in the Apostolic Writings (Matthew 10:25; 12:24; 12:27; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15; 11:18; 11:19.). He is called hasatan (satan,

adversary, one who withstands) 47 times in the NASB.

### **Adapted from the article “Angel” in *Easton's Bible Dictionary***

“Angel” is a word signifying, both in the Hebrew and Greek, a “messenger,” and hence employed to denote any agent God sends forth to execute his purposes. It is used of an ordinary messenger (Job 1:14; 1 Samuel 11:3; Luke 7:24; 9:52), of prophets (Isaiah 42:19; Haggai 1:13), of priests (Malachi 2:7), and either the Pastors or perhaps the spirit beings assigned as guardians of the seven assemblies. (Revelation 1:11,20).

It is also applied to such impersonal agents as the pestilence (2Samuel 24:16,17; 2Kings 19:35), the wind (Psalm 104:4).

But its distinctive application is to certain heavenly intelligences whom HaShem employs in carrying on His government of the world. The name does not denote their nature, but their office as messengers. The appearances to Avraham at Mamre (Genesis 18:2,22; comp. 19:1), to Ya'akov at Peniel (Genesis 32:24,30), to Y'hoshua at Gilgal (Joshua 5:13,15), of the Angel of the LORD, were without a doubt manifestations of the pre-incarnate Yeshua HaMashiach, “foreshadowings of the incarnation,” revelations before the “fulness of the time” of HaShem haBen.

The existence and orders of angelic beings can only be discovered from the Scriptures. Although the Bible does not deal with this subject specifically, there are numerous incidental details that furnish us with ample information. Their personal existence is plainly implied in such passages as Genesis 16:7,10,11; Judges 13:1-21; Matthew 28:2-5; Hebrews 1:4, etc.

These superior beings are very numerous. “A thousand thousands,” etc. (Daniel 7:10; Matthew 26:53; Luke 2:13; Hebrews 12:22,23). They are also spoken of as having different ranks in dignity and power (Zechariah 1:9,11; Daniel 10:13; 12:1; 1Thessalonians 4:16; Jude 1:9; Ephesians 1:21; Colossians 1:16).

As to their nature, they are spirits (Hebrews 1:14), similar to the soul of man, but not totally (or at least not always) incorporeal. Such expressions as “like the angels” (Luke 20:36), and the fact that whenever angels appeared to man it was always in a human form (Genesis 18:2; 19:1,10; Luke 24:4; Acts 1:10), and the titles that are applied to them (“sons of God,” Job 1:6; 38:7; Daniel 3:25,28) and to men (Luke 3:38), seem all to indicate some resemblance between them and the human race. Imperfection is ascribed to them as creatures (Job 4:18; Matthew 24:36; 1Peter 1:12). As finite creatures they may fall under temptation; and, accordingly, I read of “fallen angels.” Of the cause and manner of their “fall” We are somewhat ignorant, though a good case can be made that when HaSatan was evicted from heaven, he took a full third of the heavenly host with him (Isaiah 14:12,17); (Ezekiel 28:11-19); Luke 10:18; Revelation 12:3,4; Revelation 12:7-9).

I know that “they left their first estate” (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:7,9), and that they are “reserved unto judgment” (2Peter 2:4). When the manna is called “angels’ food,” this is merely to denote its excellence (Psalm 78:25). Angels never die (Luke 20:36). They are possessed of superhuman intelligence and power (Mark 13:32; Psalm 103:20). They are called “holy” (Luke 9:26), “elect” (1Timothy 5:21). The redeemed in glory are “like the angels” (Luke 20:36). They are not to be worshipped (Colossians 2:18; Revelation 19:10).

Their functions are manifold.

- a. In the widest sense they are agents of HaShem’s providence (Exodus 12:23; Psalm 104:4; Hebrews 11:28; 1 Corinthians 10:10; 2Sam 24:16; 1 Chronicles 21:16; 2Kings 19:35; Acts 12:23).
- b. They are specially HaShem’s agents in carrying on his great work of redemption. There is no notice of angelic appearances to man till after the call of Abraham. From that time onward there are frequent references to their ministry on earth (Genesis 18; 19; 24:7,40; 28:12; 32:1). They appear to rebuke idolatry (Judges 2:1-4), to call Gideon

(Judges 6:11,12), and to consecrate Samson (13:3). In the days of the prophets, from Samuel downward, the angels appear only in their behalf (1Kings 19:5; 2Kings 6:17; Zech. 1-6; Daniel 4:13,23; 10:10,13,20,21).

The Incarnation introduces a new era in the ministrations of angels. They come with their Lord to earth to do Him service while here. They predict His advent (Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:26-38), minister to Him after his temptation and agony (Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43), and declare His resurrection and ascension (Matthew 28:2-8; John 20:12,13; Acts 1:10,11).

They are now ministering spirits to the people of HaShem (Hebrews 1:14; Psalm 34:7; 91:11; Matthew 18:10; Acts 5:19; 8:26; 10:3; 12:7; 27:23). They rejoice over a penitent sinner (Luke 15:10). They bear the souls of the redeemed to paradise (Luke 16:22); and they will be the ministers of judgment hereafter on the great day (Matthew 13:39,41,49; 16:27; 24:31). The passages (Psalm 34:7, Matthew 18:10) referred to in support of the idea that every individual has a particular guardian angel can not be proven to have that meaning. They probably merely indicate that HaShem employs the ministry of angels to deliver his people from affliction and danger, and that the angels do not think it below their dignity to minister even to children and to the least among Yeshua's disciples.

The "angel of his presence" (Isaiah 63:9. Compare Exodus 23:20,21; 32:34; 33:2; Numbers 20:16) is probably rightly interpreted of the Messiah as the guide of his people. Others have supposed the expression to refer to Gabriel (Luke 1:19).

## About HaSatan

He is the prince of evil spirits and the inveterate adversary (one who opposes another in purpose or act) of HaShem and HaMashiach and all of mankind the adversary, and:

- he incites apostasy from HaShem and to sin

- he circumvents men by his wiles
- the worshippers of idols are said to be under his control
- by his demons he is able to take possession of men and inflict them with diseases
- by HaShem's assistance he is overcome
- on Messiah's return from heaven he will be bound with chains for a thousand years, but when the thousand years are finished he will walk the earth in yet greater power, but shortly after will be given over to eternal punishment

The prophet Yechezk'el [Ezekiel] (28:11-19) speaks the word of HaShem to "the king of Tyre" but the context demands that he is speaking not directly to the king, but rather to the power behind the king, HaSatan, for when was the king of Tyre ever in Eden, and when was he ever the "anointed cherub who covers ... on the holy mountain of God"?

Again the word of the LORD came to me saying, "Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "You had the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering; The ruby, the topaz and the diamond; The beryl, the onyx and the jasper; The lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, Was in you. On the day that you were created They were prepared. You were the anointed cherub who covers, And I placed you {there.} You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked in the midst of the stones of fire. You were blameless in your ways From the day you were created Until unrighteousness was found in you. By the abundance of your trade You were internally filled with violence, And you sinned; Therefore I have cast you as profane From the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst

of the stones of fire. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, That they may see you. By the multitude of your iniquities, In the unrighteousness of your trade You profaned your sanctuaries. Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you; It has consumed you, And I have turned you to ashes on the earth In the eyes of all who see you. All who know you among the peoples Are appalled at you; You have become terrified And you will cease to be forever.””

Likewise, the prophet Yesha'yahu (Isaiah) speaks to the king of Babylon, but here also he clearly is addressing the power behind the king, rather than addressing the king directly. (14:12-17)

“How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; will make myself like the Most High.’ Nevertheless, you will be thrust down to Sheol, To the recesses of the pit. Those who see you will gaze at you, They will ponder over you, {saying,} ‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble, Who shook kingdoms, Who made the world like a wilderness And overthrew its cities, Who did not allow his prisoners to {go} home?’”

There are only two other references in the entire Bible to anyone “fallen from heaven.” Yeshua said, “I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.” (Luke 10:18); and “Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the

earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him.” (Revelation 9:1)

### **Adapted from the article “Satan” in Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology**

The Hebrew word *satan* [שָׂטָן] means “an adversary, one who resists.” It is translated as “Satan” eighteen times in the Tanakh, fourteen of those occurrences being in Job 1-2, the others in 1Chronicles 21:1 and Zechariah 3:1-2. There is some dispute as to whether it should be taken as a proper name or a title. In Job and Zechariah, the definite article (“the”) precedes the noun (lit., “the satan” or “the accuser”). Thus, some argue it should be a title, while in 1Chronicles (without the article) it should be considered a proper name. The word is used also of various persons in the Tanakh as “adversaries,” including David (1Sam 29:4), Rezon of Damascus (1Kings 11:23,25), and the Angel of the Lord (Num 22:22,32).

Baker holds that in Job “the Satan” is not directly HaShem’s adversary, but Job’s, and says that he acts as one of HaShem’s subordinates/courtiers to follow His directives. However, a more careful reading of the text would suggest that HaSatan is, in fact, working against the purposes of HaShem by bringing accusations against innocent Job. It would appear that HaSatan still has direct access to HaShem’s throne room after being cast out, as HaShem asks what he has been doing and HaSatan replies that he has been “roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.” It seems as if he may be trying to appeal his conviction for treason by accusing HaShem of being unjust and by bringing accusations against others (“Why are You being unjustly hard on me? Just look at how bad some others are, and you aren’t doing anything to them!”)

HaSatan claims that Job is, after all, not being righteous out of love for, and trust in, HaShem, but rather that Job’s righteousness is a reaction only to his prosperity, and is based on self-interest.

Baker (along with others) believes that within the Job narrative, Satan Acts at HaShem's directive. They claim that 1:12 and 2:6-7 point to Satan's causal role in Job's life, but later texts like 6:4; 7:14; 9:17 appear to lay blame on HaShem. Thus, they say, Satan carries out divine directives.

Again, however, a closer reading of the text reveals that HaShem intends to use righteous Job as an example to turn HaSatan's argument back against himself. The tests that HaShem allowed were meant to demonstrate what Job's true motivation was. He does not direct HaSatan to inflict Job, but rather gives him permission to do so, and in 6:4; 7:14; 9:17 Job, not understanding what HaShem is doing, says that even if HaShem is doing these things to him, he still will not curse HaShem, but will continue to trust Him.

"Satan" occurs thirty-six times in the Apostolic Writings, eighteen of that number in the Gospels and Acts. The Greek term *satanas* [Satana"] is a "loan word" from the Hebrew Tanakh, and twenty-eight of the total occurrences are accompanied by the definite article.

Often in the Gospel accounts Yeshua is in contact with Satan directly or indirectly. He was tempted by Satan (Mark 1:13). In the famous "Beelzebub controversy" Yeshua made clear His intention to drive Satan out of people's lives and to destroy his sovereignty (Matt 12:26; Mark 3:23, 26; Luke 11:18). He liberated a woman "whom Satan (had) kept bound for eighteen long years" (Luke 13:16). Rav Sha'ul (Paul) spoke of his being sent to turn people "from the power of Satan to HaShem" (Acts 26:18), and that the works of the "lawless one (were) in accordance with the work of Satan," in doing sham miracles, signs, and wonders (2Thess 2:9). HaMashiach will come, he wrote, to overthrow that agent of Satan.

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<sup>4</sup> A *beit din* (Hebrew: בית דין *Bet Din*, "house of judgment" [bet 'din], Ashkenazic: *beis din*) is a rabbinical court of Judaism. In ancient times, it was the building block of the legal system in the Biblical Land of Israel.

While the activity of Satan is carried out in "the world" (i.e., among those who do not acknowledge Yeshua as HaShem), he also works against the followers of HaMashiach. He influenced Kefa's (Peter's) thinking about Yeshua to the extent that Yeshua said to his disciple, "Get behind me, Satan!" (Matt 16:23). He asked for all the disciples in order to severely test them (Luke 22:31). He "entered" Y'hudah the Sicarius (Judas Iscariot, Luke 22:3), and "filled the heart" of Ananias (Acts 5:3). Believers can be tempted by Satan due to a lack of self-control in sexual matters (1Cor 7:5), and he can even masquerade as "an angle of light" (Lucifer) to accomplish his purposes (2Cor 11:14). He tormented Rav Sha'ul by means of "a thorn in [his] flesh" (2Cor 12:7). Some people even turn away from their faith to follow Satan (1Tim 5:15).

Satan opposes the proclamation of the gospel, snatching away the seed (the word) that was sown in people's hearts (Mark 4:15; Luke 8:12). He also "stopped" Rav Sha'ul from traveling to Thessalonica (1Thess 2:18).

Satan is regarded (by some) in the Apostolic Writings as the "master of death and destruction," who carries out HaShem's wrath against sinners. Twice I read of persons "handed over to Satan" for spiritual discipline by the local *Beit Din*<sup>4</sup> (1Cor 5:1-5; 1Tim 1:19-20). This appears to suggest that perhaps "excommunication" from synagogue fellowship puts people out into Satan's realm,<sup>5</sup> a sovereignty from which believers have been rescued (Col 1:13; cf. Heb 2:14-15). In other cases, Satan attacked the disciples of Yeshua by "sifting" them (Luke 22:31), a figure that is enigmatic. It may have meant to test their faith (with HaSatan's intent of destroying it, but HaShem's intent of confirming it), or, it may have meant "to separate off the rubbish" (I. H. Marshall). In any case, Satan was up to no good. He was able to "enter" Y'hudah the

In Messianic Judaism, the *beit din* is the local body of Elders for a congregation.

<sup>5</sup> In 2Cor. 4:4, Satan is called "the god of this world" and in John 12:31 he is called "the ruler (or prince) of this world."

Sicarius<sup>6</sup> (Luke 22:3; cf. John 13:27), resulting in that disciple becoming a betrayer of his Master. Kefa's "sifting" may possibly have brought about his threefold denial of Yeshua.

The Holy Community in Jerusalem felt the brunt of Satan's attacks. He "filled" Ananias' heart causing him to lie to Ruach HaKodesh (Acts 5:3), resulting in his sudden demise. The believers in Smyrna felt the sting of persecution (Rev 2:9-10). The nations of earth in Yochanan's (John's) vision were deceived by him (Rev 20:7-8).

Yeshua spoke of seeing HaSatan "fall like lightning from heaven" (Luke 10:18), a fall not specifically identified in the Apostolic Writings, but a likely reference to Yesha'yahu (Isaiah) 14:12-17, and within the context of demons being cast out—a sign of Satan's loss of authority. In the Revelation, amid a war in heaven, Satan was "hurled to the earth" along with his angels/demons (12:9). He, the Accuser, was overcome by One stronger than he. Finally, he is bound, imprisoned in the abyss for one thousand years, then ultimately banished in the fiery lake to suffer eternal torment (20:1-3, 10; cf. Matt 25:41).

The other common appellation for Satan in the Apostolic Writings is "the devil" (*diabolos* [diabolo]), not found in the Tanakh, but thirty-four times in the Apostolic Writings, meaning one who is traducer, a slanderer. The word is often translated *satan* [Satan] in the Septuagint (either as "the satan" or an "adversary").

In the Apostolic Writings the word appears to be used interchangeably with "Satan," although in the KJV the word for "demon" is often erroneously translated<sup>7</sup> as "devil." Mark refers to "Satan" five times, but never uses "devil." Matthew has three of the former, but six of the latter. The Fourth Gospel has one instance of "Satan" (with none in the Epistles of John), while the "devil" (as Satan) occurs twice in the Gospel and three times in the Epistles.

Yeshua would drive out "the prince of this world" (John 12:31); HaSatan would have no hold on Mashiach, for he was without sin (14:30); and HaSatan stood condemned at the bar of HaShem's judgment (16:11). While the devil has had a career of sinning "from the beginning," the Son of God came to destroy his wicked works (1John 3:8). Those unable to hear and receive Yeshua's words "belong to the devil," who is their "father" (John 8:44)— they share a family likeness to him.

Believers need to exercise care about anger, so as "not to give the devil a foothold" (Eph 4:26). They are to don God's full armor so as to stand against the devil's schemes. With the shield of faith, they are to thwart his "flaming arrows" (Eph 6:11,16). Ultimate victory comes by "the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony," as the devil is cast down from heaven to the earth (Rev 12:11).

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### **Adapted from the article "Demon" in Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology**

A demon is a spirit being who is unclean and immoral in nature and activities. When demons were created, how they came to be demonic, and their organizational structure are not given significant attention in Scripture because the focus throughout the Bible is on HaShem and his work in Christ rather than on the demonic attempts to demean that work.

the Puritans and to preserve the dogma of the Church of England, not to provide an accurate translation of the text.

<sup>6</sup> Judas Iscariot.

<sup>7</sup> The translators of the KJV were not well acquainted with Koine Greek. In any event, their primary directive from James was to oppose the teachings of

## In the Tanakh

References to demons in the Tanakh are relatively scarce. Their existence is never proven; it is simply assumed. The Tanakh focus is not on demons and their schemes but on HaShem and his sovereignty.

Demons are not depicted as free, independent agents, but operate under HaShem's direct control. Though they are not revealed as the malicious beings seen in the Apostolic Writings, there are still definitive commands for HaShem's people to avoid them.

The Tanakh word for demons (*sed* [שֵׁד]) appears only twice. They are "gods they had not known, gods that recently appeared, gods your fathers did not fear" (Deut 32:17), and Israel is condemned by HaShem for sacrificing to them (Psalm 106:37).

They are also called evil spirits sent from HaShem.

After Abimelech treacherously killed Gideon's sons, HaShem sent an evil spirit that divided him from the citizens of Shechem (Judges 9:23-24). HaShem also sent an evil spirit to torment Saul. David's attempts to calm Saul by playing the harp (1Sam 16:15-16) are unsuccessful, as Saul, provoked by the spirit, tries to kill David (1Sam 16:14-23; 18:10-11; 19:9-10). A spirit from HaShem's counsel volunteers to be a lying spirit in the mouths of Ahab's prophets (1Kings 22:19-23; 2Chron 18:18-22). The medium from Endor sees "gods" or "spirits" coming up from the ground (1Sam 28:13). An angel is delayed twenty-one days in bringing an answer to Daniel's prayer by a prince of Persia, giving an indication of some organizational structure or ranking among demons (Dan 10:13). This also gives us one of the few glimpses behind the curtains of history into engagements between demons and angels.

Other possible Tanakh references to demons include goat idols (Lev 17:7; 2Chron 11:15; Isa 13:21; 34:14), night creatures (Isa 34:14), and idols (LXX of Psalm 96:5).

## Demons during the Life of Yeshua

There is more recorded demonic activity during Yeshua's life than any other time in biblical history. This is to be expected, since

it is only reasonable that HaSatan would always fight harder when confronted with his impending defeat. As HaSatan is not omniscient, when Yeshua's presence is imminent, he must assume that his time has come. Thus, I can expect to see an increase in his activity on earth as the time approaches for the Messiah's return to rule and reign.

Though demonic confrontations are mentioned throughout the Gospels, I find only eight case studies of actual encounters. These include Yeshua's temptation (Matt 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13); the blind man (Matt 9:32-33); the blind and mute man (Matt 12:22-23; Luke 11:14); the Canaanite woman's daughter (Matt 15:22-28; Mark 7:24-30); the man in the synagogue (Mark 1:23-27; Luke 4:31-37); the Gerasene demoniac (Matt 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-37); the boy with seizures (Matt 17:14-20; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-43); and the silencing of demons (Matt 8:16; Mark 1:32-35; Luke 4:40-41).

Other possible examples include the seven demons expelled from Miriam of Magdala (Luke 8:1-2), Yeshua's rebuke of Satan's suggestion through Peter (Matt 16:23; Mark 8:33), and his command to Y'hudah Sicarius after Satan had entered him (John 13:27). Additionally, We are told that the disciples (Luke 10:17-20) and even someone they did not know (Mark 9:38-40) saw demons submit to them, but We are not given any other details.

There are three main terms for demons in the Apostolic Writings: *daimonion* [daimonion] (demon; 60 times, 50 in the Gospels); *pneuma* [pneuma] (spirit; some 52 times) usually with a qualifying adjective such as *akatharton* [akatharton] (unclean; 21 times) or *poneron* [poneron] (evil; 8 times); and *angelos* [angelos] (7 times of demonic agencies). *Daimon* (demon), the term commonly used in classical Greek, appears only once (Mark 8:31).

Throughout Yeshua's life I see His work against the devastating work of demons in the lives of people. The vocabulary of demonic activities against human beings is rich and varied, though it all shows movement toward the ultimate destruction of people. Demons

troubled or annoyed people (Luke 6:18). They robbed a young boy of his speech (Mark 9:17,25), rendered a man mute (Matt 9:33; Luke 11:14), and froze the back of an elderly woman (Luke 13:11,16). They seized the Gerasene demoniac (Luke 8:29) and a young boy (Luke 9:39) in order to destructively overcome him.

Throughout the Gospel accounts, spirits evidenced control over human hosts. Several terms are used to describe this. Jesus warned in a parable of the possibility of multiple demons living in or indwelling a person (Matt 12:43-45; Luke 11:24-26). Evil spirits were in the demoniac in the synagogue (Mark 1:23); the Gerasene demoniac was a person who was with a spirit (Mark 5:2; “[in the power] of an unclean spirit,” Amplified) that drove or impelled him (Luke 8:29). Many were described as having (*echo* [e ʃw] an evil or unclean spirit (Matt 11:18; Mark 3:30; 7:25; 9:17; Luke 4:33; 7:33; 8:27; John 7:20; 8:48,52; 10:20). Such a spirit entered the young boy (Mark 9:25; Luke 8:30) and then mauled and convulsed him.

People who have demons are demonized (*daimonizomai* [daimonizomai] Matt 4:24; 8:16,28,33; 12:22; 15:22; Mark 1:32; 5:15,16,18; Luke 8:36; John 10:21). This term is generally translated as demon-possessed. However, *daimonizomai* [daimonizomai] does not convey the English concept of possession (either ownership or eternal destiny) as much as it does temporary control (“under the power of demons,” Amplified). This idea is seen in the elderly woman who was bound by Satan for eighteen years before being set free by Yeshua (Luke 13:16).

The Apostolic Writings describe physical, social, and spiritual symptoms of demonic control, though no exhaustive list is given. The physical symptoms include muteness (Matt 9:32-33; Mark 9:17; Luke 11:14), blindness (Matt 12:22), self-inflicted wounds (Mark 5:5; 9:22), crying (Mark 5:4), or screaming (Mark 1:26; 5:7; 9:26), convulsions (Mark 1:26), seizures (Matt 17:15), falling to the ground, rolling around, foaming at the mouth, grinding of the teeth, and rigidity (Mark 9:18,20), inhuman strength (Mark 5:3-

4), and staying active day and night (Mark 5:5). The social symptoms include dwelling in unclean places (Mark 5:3; Luke 8:27) and going around naked (Luke 8:27). The spiritual symptoms include supernatural abilities such as recognition of the person of the Messiah and reaction against him (Mark 1:23-24; 5:7; Luke 4:40-41) and the ability to tell the future (divination Acts 16:16). None of these symptoms by itself should be seen as proof of demonization. Rather, they are examples of the types of manifestations that come with demonic infestation.

Yeshua came to set Satan’s captives free (Matt 12:22-29; Luke 4:18-21), and in all of his dealing with the demonized He demonstrated compassion for the people and authority over the spirits. He commanded the spirit in the Gerasene demoniac to come out (Luke 8:29) and ordered the demon out of the man in the synagogue (Mark 1:27) and the young boy (Mark 9:25). He did not have to be physically present to effect release, seen in the healing of the Canaanite woman’s cruelly demonized daughter from a distance (Matt 15:22-28). The people were amazed that he simply commanded the demons and they obeyed (Luke 4:36), as they were used to seeing elaborate exorcism rituals that were not always successful. The demons in the Gerasene demoniac needed Yeshua’s permission to enter the pigs (Mark 5:13; Luke 8:32) and he denied permission for demons to speak (Mark 1:34; Luke 4:41). He rebuked the demon in the young boy (Matt 17:18; Mark 9:25; Luke 9:42) and the man in the synagogue (Mark 1:25; Luke 4:35).

The term most commonly used of the expulsion of demons in the Apostolic Writings is “cast out” (*ekballo* [ekbavɪ w]). In classical Greek and Tanakh usage it had the sense of forcibly driving out an enemy. In the Apostolic Writings, it is typically used of a physical removal (John 9:34-35; see also Mark 1:12). Demons were cast out by the spirit of Ha-

Shem (Matt 12:28; cf. Luke 11:20; “by the finger of HaShem”)<sup>8</sup>, and this was done by verbal command rather than the elaborate rituals of the exorcists. Yeshua’s authority to cast out demons was given to the Twelve (Matt 10:1,8) and others, who cast them out in Yeshua’s name (Mark 9:38-41; see also Acts 16:18). The disciples were successful in casting out demons, but needed a reminder to keep their priorities straight (Luke 10:17-20). With the young boy, however, they were unsuccessful because of lack of prayer (Mark 9:28-29).

There are several primary words employed in the Gospels to describe Yeshua’s healing ministry among the demonized. He released (*luo* [l|uw]) the woman bound by demons for eighteen years (Luke 13:16). He saved (*sozo* [swzww]) the Gerasene demoniac (Luke 8:36). He healed (*therapeuo* [qerapeuw]) many (Matt 4:24; 10:22; 17:16; Luke 6:18; 7:21; 8:2; 13:14), a word used of healing the sick (lame, blind, mute, maimed, deaf) as well as the demonized and even of satanic healing. Its use implied that the restoration of demoniacs was on the same level of ministry as other types of healing, all of which showed Yeshua’s mastery over Satan and sin. Yeshua also healed (*iaomai* [ijaomai]) many who had spirits (Luke 6:19; under the power of Satan), including the Canaanite woman’s daughter (Matt 15:28) and the young boy (Luke 9:42).

### **Demons in Acts and the Epistles**

In comparison with the Gospels, demonic encounters are relatively rare. Spirits are mentioned in only five instances in Acts. Those tormented by evil spirits were brought before the apostles in Jerusalem and healed (5:15-16). Philip, not an apostle, exercised Yeshua’s authority over demons in Samaria (8:6-7). Rav Sha’ul released a slave girl who had a fortunetelling spirit by simply commanding the spirit to leave (16:16-18). Ha-Shem performed extraordinary miracles

through Sha’ul in Ephesus, including the expulsion of demons (19:11-12). The final instance was between Jewish exorcists and a demoniac in which the exorcists were soundly beaten (19:13-17). When the local Messianic synagogue heard what happened, those who had not fully come out of their magical practices repented and publicly burned their expensive scrolls (19:17-20). The failure of the non-Messianic exorcists shows that in power encounters authority is the underlying issue. Interestingly, the term “exorcism” is not used of Yeshua’s ministry. An exorcism implies a particular ritual, and Yeshua, as well as the early Messianic community, relied on authority rather than ritual. It is not surprising, then, that nowhere in the Apostolic Writings is a Messianic ritual for exorcism seen.<sup>9</sup>

The relative paucity of overt examples of demonic confrontation is one indication of a shift from a form of direct power encounter with demons to a focus on knowing and correctly applying the truth to thwart demonic influence. This is also seen in the emphasis on deception as a tool of Satan and his demons. They pretend to be friendly spirits to deceive people (2Cor 11:15) and blind the minds of believers (2Cor 4:3-4). They lead people astray from truth (2Tim 3:13; 1John 2:26; 3:7). They also lead people astray through the pursuit of pleasure or sensual gratification (Eph 5:6; Col 2:8; 2Thess 2:3).

The emphasis on truth in the Epistles does not mean that power encounters are unimportant or no longer viable today. Rather, the implication is that our day-to-day struggle with demonic forces will focus on truth issues without overlooking power issues. Appropriate truth encounter metaphors for spiritual conflict in the Epistles include walking in the light (1John 1:5-7), the stripping off of the old and joyfully putting on the new (Eph 4:22-29), our participation in a kingdom transfer (Col 1:13), which involves a transformation of

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<sup>8</sup> I really love this term, “the finger of God.” It strongly implies that HaShem has more power in His little finger than all the evil forces in the universe combined.

<sup>9</sup> This strongly suggests to me that the Roman Church relies on ritual because they have no authority.

our nature as people (2Cor 5:17), and our growth into the full measure of the stature of Messiah (Eph 4:14-16).

Believers are not immune from demonic attack. Demons seek to influence Believers through false doctrines and teachings (1Tim 4:1; 1John 4:1-4) as well as false miracles and wonders (2Thess 2:7-11; Rev 16:14). Sha'ul was buffeted (2Cor 12:7; see Matt 26:67; 1Cor 4:11; 1Peter 2:20; for the physical aspect). Though there can be no certainty as to how this buffeting was manifested, I do know that an "angel of Satan" caused it and that Sha'ul could not remove it through prayer. In the West, evangelicals have been preoccupied with the question of whether a true Believer can be demon-possessed. Such a conclusion, however, can only be an inappropriate translation of *daimonizomai* [daimon-izomai] because of the English connotations of possession with ownership, which is not in the original. Demons do not own or possess any Believers, who are HaShem's sole possession (as are the demons themselves). Though Believers cannot be owned or have their eternal destiny controlled by a demon, this does not necessarily mean that they cannot be demonized or temporarily controlled by demons, or have demons temporarily indwell them.

The evidence pointing against demonization of the believer includes Yeshua's defeat of Satan on the cross (John 12:31; Col 2:14-15; Heb 2:14-15), HaShem's presence in (2Cor 6:16), and protection of the believer (1John 5:18), and our status as being seated with Yeshua (Eph 2:6). Evidence in favor of the demonization of believers includes the statements of our need to know Satan's schemes (2Cor 2:11) so that he will not gain a foothold on us (Eph 4:26-27), the reality of demonic attack against believers (2Cor 11:3; 12:7; Eph 6:10-12), and the commands to resist him (James 4:7; 1Peter 5:8-9). No one should doubt that Satan and his demons are able to influence Believers; the question is whether that influence can result in demonization. Further evidence in favor of the possibility of Believers being demonized are the instances of King Sha'ul's torment from an

evil spirit (1Sam 16:14-23), the daughter of Abraham being bound by Satan for eighteen years (Luke 13:10-17), and Ananias and Sapphira having their hearts "filled by Satan" (Acts 5:3). None of these has been without dispute, but Scripture indicates that all were of the house of faith, and that all faced demonic attack. This parallels the experience of many people today. While experience is not the final arbiter of doctrinal formulation, our experience should be in accord with our doctrine. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that Believers may be demonized, and that the warnings to stand against Satan are not just to stop his attacks against the Holy Community or his control over those who do not believe.

Whatever our conclusion on demonization of Believers, Messianics clearly have the identity (being in Messiah), the authority (being seated with Messiah), and the mandate to resist Satan and his demons. I do so not on the basis of our own goodness, but on the basis of Messiah's finished work. Because the One who is in us is greater than the one who is in the world (1John 4:4), I can successfully stand against demonic schemes. Our weapons in this ongoing struggle include our authority as seated with Messiah at the right hand of HaShem, far above every power (Eph 1:15-2:6), the name of Yeshua (Php 2:10), our spiritual armor (Eph 6:18), prayer (a must in some cases, Mark 9:29), simple resistance (Jas 4:7), forgiveness (Eph 4:26-27), and exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23; Eph 4:22-29; 6:10-18).

## Conclusion

The testimony of the Scriptures regarding demons is clear and cohesive. They are angelic entities who oppose HaShem's sovereign control. They seek to work out their unholy rebellion through influencing people to live in a way contrary to HaShem's expressed intentions. At the same time, they remain under his sovereignty and can be used of him to effect the divine plan. As Messianics We are to submit ourselves to HaShem and resist the attacks of Satan and his hosts. To do so, I must be aware of the basic truths presented

in Scripture concerning not just the ontology of demons but their methods as they attempt to influence our lives. Once aware, we are to take our stand in Messiah and oppose the working of demons, whether personally, corporately, or in the structures and systems of society.

A. Scott Moreau

Bibliography: C. Arnold, Powers of Darkness: W. Carr, Angels and Principalities (1981); C. F. Dickason, Angels: Elect and Evil: idem, Demon Possession and the Christian; J. W. Montgomery, ed: Demon Possession; H. Schier, Principalities and Powers in the New Testament (1961); M. Unger, Biblical Demonology; idem, What Demons Can Do to Saints; M. Wink, Naming the Powers; idem, Unmasking the Powers; idem, Engaging the Powers.

## About Humanity

I believe that man was originally created in the image of HaShem, by HaShem's own hand and not by any process of evolution or natural selection, and was given the authority and ability to exercise dominion over the created world. Adam chose to disobey HaShem, and because of his disobedience Adam, all of his descendants, and all of his entire dominion fell under HaShem's curse. Sin, sickness, and death entered the world; man became alienated from HaShem and inherited a sin nature, is totally depraved, possesses no spark of divine life, and, of himself, is utterly helpless to remedy his lost condition apart from the grace of HaShem.

## About Sin

Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness ; and sin is lawlessness. (1John 3:4, NAS)

Everyone who keeps sinning is violating Torah - indeed, sin is violation of Torah.

(1John 3:4, CJB)

In the above passage the CJB comes much closer to an accurate rendering than does the NAS. The word that the NAS translates as

“lawlessness” is *anomia* (anomia), which literally means “without law,” but as I pointed out under the section on the Torah, the word that the English translations of the Apostolic Scriptures translates as “law” (*nomos* (νομοσ)) is the same word used in the LXX (Septuagint, an early Greek translation of the Tanakh) to translate the word “Torah,” which is God's divine instruction. Thus Yochanan (John) says that the one who practices sin is living without Torah, that is, apart from God's divine instruction.

The root concept for “sin” in both Hebrew and Greek is based on an archery term that means “to miss the mark.” In a larger sense, since the “target” is the perfect example of holiness and complete obedience to Torah that was set by Yeshua — that is, the very nature of HaShem Himself — then I believe that anything that falls short of that goal misses the mark and is, by the broadest sense of its definition, “sin.” HaShem has commanded us to “be holy, for I am holy.” (Lev 11:44,45; quoted in 1Pet 1:16)

I believe that there are two classifications of sin:

- (1) original (imputed) sin, that sin nature which every human inherits from his/her father Adam, and
- (2) personal sin, the individual choices each person makes to either willfully or ignorantly disobey HaShem and His Torah.

I believe that all men and women are totally depraved, without personal merit, and completely unable to save themselves.

I believe that the penalty for sin is separation from fellowship, which takes one or more of three forms:

- (1) separation from HaShem (spiritual death);
- (2) separation from the visible Body of Mashiach through discipline and “excommunication” (which is to be practiced by the Elders [or Beit Din] of the local congregation solely for the sake of maintaining the purity of the Body of

Mashiach and for producing the repentance and eventual restoration of the sinning brother or sister), and

- (3) separation from this earth and from the physical body through physical death. I believe that the physical illness and death of all earthly creatures is the direct result of Adam's sin, and that some physical illness and death is the result of personal sin.

## About Salvation

I believe that salvation is the free gift of HaShem brought to sinful man by the unconditional grace of HaShem and received solely by personal faith in the completed redemptive work of Adonai Yeshua HaMashiach. I believe that salvation comes by faith in the Person and completed work of Yeshua, plus nothing else!

I believe that because of the fact of the eternal, unconditional, and unilateral promise of HaShem, because of the nature of the Word and promises of HaShem, and because of the immutability of the unchangeable covenants of HaShem, all the redeemed, blood-bought, regenerate, and sanctified children of HaShem have entered into an unbreakable relational covenant with HaShem, are completely and permanently indwelt by Ruach HaKodesh, and are constantly interceded for by Yeshua HaMashiach, our Kohen HaGadol (High Priest). I believe that they are therefore secure in Mashiach forever.

I believe that before the foundation of the world, for His own purpose and for His own glory, HaShem foreknew, predestined, called, justified, and glorified all those who are to be redeemed; that is, "predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom 8:29) and adopted "as sons through Yeshua HaMashiach to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will" (Eph 1:5).

The Scriptures refer to these individuals as His "elect," all of whom have had their names

written in the Lamb's Book of Life from before the foundation of the world (Phil 4:3; Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12; 20:15).

Although HaShem sovereignly elects some to salvation and glory, paradoxically the election of the saved in no way demonstrates that HaShem is responsible for the damnation of those who are not elect to salvation. The Scripture makes it quite clear that it is not HaShem's will than any should perish. I believe that the Scriptures clearly teach that "whosoever will" may come to saving faith in Yeshua HaMashiach (Isa 28:16; Joel 2:3; John 3:14; 4:4; Rom 10:11; 10:13).

I also believe that the Scriptures just as clearly teach that "the elect" were chosen from before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4; 1Pet 1:20).

I believe that from man's limited perspective he perceives that he has a measure of "free will," but that from HaShem's perspective HaShem is absolutely and completely sovereign, and is thus in total control of every event that occurs in time, space, and eternity. Although HaShem receives all the glory and honor for all those who are saved, He in no way is to blame for any who are lost. I believe that these facts are in no way paradoxical or contradictory, only that they can only be properly understood from HaShem's perspective.

I believe that it is the privilege of all Believers in Mashiach to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation and their freedom from "bondage" to the eternal penalties imposed by Torah through the testimony of HaShem's Word which, however, clearly forbids the use of that liberty as an occasion to sin.

Though free from "bondage to legalism," I believe that every person is yet accountable to the standard of righteousness that HaShem has defined in His Torah. I believe that all mankind, and especially Believers in Mashiach, are obligated to obey all the mitzvot (commandments) of Torah that apply to them.<sup>10</sup> Exceptions would include those

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<sup>10</sup> As stated in the section on Torah, I believe that the Torah constitutes the "Constitution" of the Commonwealth of Israel now, in the Kingdome Age, and in

which are specific to life in Eretz Israel<sup>11</sup>, or those which require the presence of a Holy Temple on Mount Moriah, or those which are specific to particular classes of people (priests, employers, men, women, etc.).

However, I believe that no man has ever been, or will ever be, saved or counted as righteous through observance of or obedience to Torah, but only through faith in Him who is the Giver of Torah, plus nothing else.

I believe that at the moment of salvation, each person is literally transformed into a “new creation” which the Bible also refers to as a “saint” or “holy person” (2Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15) — that is, a person who has been “set apart” (“sanctified”) by HaShem to be His precious possession and to serve His specific purpose.

I believe that sanctification is a “setting apart” of the believer unto HaShem and that it consists of three steps or stages in the believer’s life: positional sanctification, progressive sanctification, and ultimate sanctification.

I believe that all Believers in Mashiah should live in obedience to Torah and in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord, and that separation from all religious apostasy and sinful pleasures, prac-

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believe that obedience to Torah, to the extent that obedience is possible, is incumbent upon all believers in Messiah, including “the Gentile Church.”

<sup>11</sup> ארץ ישראל *Eretz Yisrael* is Hebrew for “the Land of Israel.”

<sup>12</sup> The Babylon Mystery Religion is the first (and therefore oldest, and the foundation of all others) false religion in the world, and is the foundation for all Mother/Son worship. It is the worship of Nimrod (the first king of Babel[on] and Nineveh [Gen 10:8-12]) and his mother, Semiramis, and was developed in Babylon by Semiramis.

After the death of Nimrod, his adulterous wife Semiramis gave birth to a child who she claims was “supernaturally conceived.” She taught that her son Tammuz was Nimrod reborn, and that she and her child were divine. Among the Chinese, the Mother Goddess was called Shingmoo or the “Holy Mother.” The ancient Germans worshipped the Virgin “Hertha” with child in arms. The Scandinavians called her Disa, Etruscans called her Nutria, and among the Druids, the “Virgo-Paritura” was worshipped as the “Mother of

God.” In India, she was known as Indrani, who was also represented with a child in her arms. The Babylonian Mother was known as Aphodite or Ceres to the Greeks, Nana to the Sumerians, and as Venus or Fortuna to the pagans in Rome, and her child was known as Jupiter. For ages, Isi, the “Great Goddess” and her child Iswara, have been worshipped in India.

## About God’s Shabbat

I believe that the seventh-day Shabbat is clearly taught in the Torah, and that has never been changed or rescinded in any way. Failure to “remember” and “keep” Shabbat is a violation of the Fourth Commandment (Exodus 20:8). I believe that when he blended the Jewish sect known as “The Way” with the Babylon Mystery Religion<sup>12</sup> (ca 431-435 CE), Constantine deliberately abolished the biblical Shabbat and replaced it with the worship of the sun god, hence the name of the first day of the week is “sun-day.”

“On the venerable day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country however persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits because it often happens that another day is not suitable for grain-sowing or vine planting; lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost.” (Constantine, 321 CE)

In Asia, the Mother was known as Cybele and the child as Deoius. The Bible mentions this Mother-Goddess worship when the children of Israel fell into apostasy. Judges 2:13 says, “They forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.” Ashtaroth (Ashtoreth) was also called “the queen of heaven” (Jeremiah 44:17-19). In Ephesus she was known as “Diana of the Ephesians” and in Egypt she is Isis and her child is Horus. She is worshipped as the “Queen of Heaven ... by [some] Christians, mainly Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, and Orthodox Churches, to whom the title is a consequence of the Council of Ephesus [431 CE], where the Virgin Mary was proclaimed Mother of God” following the tradition of the Babylon Mystery Religion.

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That Sunday worship was in place by 435 CE is evident to its reference in Canon 20 of the Council of Nicea (ca. May-August 325):

Canon 20: On Sundays and during the Paschal season prayers should be said standing. Since there are some who kneel on Sunday and during the season of Pentecost, this holy synod decrees that, so that the same observances may be maintained in every diocese, one should offer one's prayers to the Lord standing.

The Council of Laodicea (ca. 364) ordered that all religious observances were to be conducted on Sunday, not Shabbat.

Christians shall not Judaize and (thus) be idle on Saturday [Saturn's Day], but shall work on that day.

The following quotations are mirrored from SabbathToSundayChange.com, which contains much more excellent material on the subject, and is recommended for further study.

## Quotes from the Catholic Church in regards to the Sabbath to Sunday change

Below are a few quotes from the Roman Catholic Church which further reveal why most Churches now keep Sunday as the Sabbath. The Catholic Church may be wrong on many things, but everything about these quotes below is true. When they say they are responsible for the final change of the Sabbath to Sunday, they are not delusional, and they speak truth.

It was Satan's plan to have the "church" change the Sabbath to Sunday. Why did Satan do this? The Torah says that keeping the Fourth Commandment regarding Shabbat is a sign as to whom we worship and give our allegiance (Exodus 31:12-17). If we obey God and keep His Sabbath holy, we give our allegiance to God. If we obey the commandment of the Catholic Church and keep their day

Holy, then to whom do we give our allegiance? The Catholic Church answers this question below with two of their quotes.

But looking even deeper, who gave the "church" the power to change God's true day of worship, and why? This picture is just one of many that reveal the extent of Sun worship in the Catholic Church.



## Does the Bible support the change to Sunday?

"For example, nowhere in the Bible do I find that Christ or the Apostles ordered that the Sabbath be changed from Saturday to Sunday. I have the commandment of God given to Moses to keep holy the Sabbath day, that is the 7th day of the week, Saturday. Today most Christians keep Sunday because it has been revealed to us by the [Roman Catholic] church outside the Bible." (*Catholic Virginian*, October 3, 1947, p. 9, article "To Tell You the Truth.")

"Is not every Christian obliged to sanctify Sunday and to abstain on that day from unnecessary servile work? Is not the observance of this law among the most prominent of our sacred duties? But you may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which I never sanctify." (James Cardinal Gibbons, *The Faith of Our Fathers* (1917 edition, p. 72-73; 16th Edition, p 111; 88th Edition, p. 89).

## Who Made Sunday Holy?

"Question - Which is the Sabbath day?

"Answer - Saturday is the Sabbath day.

"Question - Why do I observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

"Answer - I observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church, in the Council of Laodicea (A.D. 364), transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday." (Pe-

ter Geiermann, C.S.S.R., *The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*, p. 50, 3rd edition, 1957)

“Perhaps the boldest thing, the most revolutionary change the Church ever did, happened in the first century. The holy day, the Sabbath, was changed from Saturday to Sunday. ‘The day of the Lord’ was chosen, not from any direction noted in the Scriptures, but from the (Catholic) Church’s sense of its own power... People who think that the Scriptures should be the sole authority, should logically become 7th Day Adventists, and keep Saturday holy.” (*St. Catherine Church Sentinel*, Algonac, Michigan, May 21, 1995)

## Whose Day of Worship is Sunday?

“They [the Protestants] deem it their duty to keep the Sunday holy. Why? Because the Catholic Church tells them to do so. They have no other reason... The observance of Sunday thus comes to be an ecclesiastical law entirely distinct from the divine law of Sabbath observance... The author of the Sunday law... is the Catholic Church.” (*Ecclesiastical Review*, February 1914)

“It is well to remind the Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, and all other Christians, that *the Bible does not support them anywhere in their observance of Sunday* [emphasis added]. Sunday is an institution of the Roman Catholic Church, and those who observe the day observe a commandment of the Catholic Church.” (Priest Brady, in an address reported in *The News*, Elizabeth, New Jersey, March 18, 1903)

## Who Do We Reverence by Keeping Sunday Holy?

“I have repeatedly offered \$1,000 to anyone who can prove to me from the Bible alone that I am bound to keep Sunday holy. There is no such law in the Bible. It is a law of the holy Catholic Church alone. The Bible says, ‘Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.’ The Catholic Church says: ‘No. By my divine power I abolish the Sabbath day and command you to keep holy the first day of the

week.’ And lo! The entire civilized world bows down in a reverent obedience to the command of the holy Catholic Church.” (Father T. Enright, C.S.S.R. of the Redemptoral College, Kansas City, in a lecture at Hartford, Kansas, February 18, 1884, printed in *History of the Sabbath*, p. 802)

“It was the Catholic church which... has transferred this rest to Sunday in remembrance of the resurrection of our Lord. Therefore, the observance of Sunday by the Protestants is an homage they pay, in spite of themselves, to the authority of the (Catholic) church.” (Monsignor Louis Segur, *Plain Talk About the Protestantism of Today*, p. 213)

## Common Lies About Shabbat

Why is it that Sunday is not taught to have any qualities of Shabbat? Why is Sunday not honored by most of those who say they observe it? Why is the seventh day Sabbath not observed or honored by most believers?

### Lie #1: I don't need a Sabbath rest anymore.

Some say I do not need a Sabbath rest anymore. That is untrue because our bodies still need rest; but even if that was so, the Shabbat is not based on our need, for God did not rest because He was tired, but rather to appreciate His work. Does the Creator no longer want to have His creation appreciated? The fact is Hebrews 4:9 says, “There remains the Sabbath for the people of God.”

Messiah said that He is “Lord of the Sabbath” (Matt. 12:8). Since He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and He is the God of the living and not of the dead, then quite naturally the Shabbat remains today. One might also postulate that if God does not keep His promise concerning the Sabbath creation for us, then it would be prudent for us all to worry each morning as to whether the Sun will rise.

Someone may well say, “But the Sabbath was made for man.” Well said! Therefore, the Most High has given you a gift from Himself; actually, a part of His own holiness. Oh, and

don't forget, "the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Rom 11:29). So, your statement only proves the continuation of the Shabbat.

Another may say, "Well, if the Sabbath is a gift, then I can do with it what I want." To that person I would respond, "You would be wise not to throw any of God's gifts into the trash! Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." How many times have you done something for someone you love, even if you did not view it with favor? Why would anyone who loves God not want to do what He loves?

## **Lie #2: Messiah broke the Shabbat**

For far too long people have been deceived into thinking that Messiah Yeshua (Jesus of Nazareth) broke the Sabbath in order to show us we were free from the Sabbath. The entire concept of Messiah breaking the Sabbath is a blasphemy and an affront to the Most High. It is born out of ignorance and rebellion.

Why would anyone want to be "free" from a gift of God? Actually, Messiah affirmed the Shabbat with the things that He did, and *only performed those deeds that were permissible on Shabbat*. His critics came against Him with their current traditions for Shabbat keeping, which were not commanded in the Torah. They were traditions of men, not commandments of God. Messiah Yeshua healed on the Shabbat because healing is a form of being freed from labor, which is central to the Shabbat. Also, Messiah Yeshua never committed sin. He never broke God's Torah, which, by the way, was His own, the thing which He wrote Himself!

## **Lie #3: Messiah canceled Shabbat by fulfilling Torah**

Messiah Yeshua said, "Do not think that I came to abolish the [Torah] or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17).

First, it must be understood that this was a common idiomatic rabbinic formula relating to the proper interpretation of Torah.

When discussing a particularly difficult passage, the rabbi would ask his students for their interpretation. If the student interpreted the passage correctly, the rabbi would exclaim, "Mazel tov! You have fulfilled Torah." But if the student interpreted the passage incorrectly, the rabbi would admonish him, "You have just abolished Torah!"

Even if the Master did not have this idiom in mind when he made the statement, it still is grammatic nonsense to think that "fulfilling" the Torah can possibly mean to cancel it out or overturn it. To argue that "fulfilling" means the same as "cancellation" is simply faulty reasoning. Thinking so illogically can surely only mean one is either under some kind of deceiving influence or a fool, devoid of all reason.

Fulfilling has absolutely nothing to do with destroying or annulling; actually, fulfilling is the exact opposite of annulment. Fulfilling means to complete or make whole; to fill to the full.

Why should Messiah take away the Shabbat by His death and resurrection? How could that possibly correlate? Surely Messiah has provided us with a spiritual rest from sin, a kind of Sabbath rest within the soul. However, that in no way removes, abolishes, or changes the seventh-day Shabbat. The Shabbat was given before sin came into the world, so it cannot possibly be a type of rest from sin. On the seventh day of creation, did God rest from His sin or from his work? To put forth the seventh day Sabbath as a type of rest from sin progresses towards blasphemy, because it implies that God needed rest from sin, since He rested then. Of course, the Apostolic Scriptures nowhere imply such. It is a merely a feeble excuse perpetrated by unreasonable minds to excuse disobedience to God's Torah.

## **Lie #4: I can choose any day to be my Sabbath**

The Shabbat is rest from the labor of creative processes. God stopped creating on the Sabbath, so we also stop. When our mind and hands have stopped creating, we have

time and ability to appreciate what has been created, especially by the Creator. Only then are we experiencing something He experienced. Since He is holy, then the experience of His Shabbat is holy. As we experience His Holy Day, then we are holy also.

The only regular day of the week the Most High ever made holy is the seventh day. Only He can decide what day is holy. No matter how hard we try we cannot make a day holy, because holiness is not dependent on our actions. Holiness is solely dependent on His determination.

Many believers have thought to make certain religious days holy by the force of their celebration on that day. Such is arrogance and ignorance. There is not one single place in all the Bible where anything is holy, except that called holy by the mouth of the great "I AM." Therefore, no person can choose any day they wish to celebrate the Shabbat, because only the seventh day is holy. Celebration of Sabbath rest on any other day is totally void.

## How should we celebrate Shabbat?

Shabbat was meant to be a celebration of rest. It should be joyful and fun, while totally respectful and thoughtful of the Most High. It should not be a feast for getting selfish desires. Children should know that God loves their playfulness, but it should be balanced. There should not be fasting on Shabbat unless it is an extended fast which goes longer than a week.

There is to be no regular mundane work on Shabbat, especially building or creating with the hands. Spiritual work, emergency work, healing work, protective work, priestly work, feeding, and guarding (military and police) are all allowed exceptions. God wants us to use our common sense. He also knows that in a non-Shabbat-honoring world people will be required by employers to work on Shabbat. The Sabbath-keeper should make every effort not to work on the seventh day by being kindly communicative with employers about their wishes and/or looking for an alternative

vocation. If a person cannot avoid regular work on Shabbat, they definitely should be seeking the Most High for a remedy as they depart their workday.

Other kinds of work that are not in the spirit of Shabbat include building a fire, doing commerce (except that which is necessary according to the above exceptions), seeking out worldly entertainment, and doing any activity that causes a fuss, a ruckus, or disrespectfully loud noises.

On Shabbat there should be praying, praising, worshiping, reading Holy Scripture, singing unto the Lord, even dancing unto the Lord, and talking to others about the Lord and His Word; that is, whatever honors the Most High honors His Shabbat.

Remember, the seventh day is sundown Friday to sundown Saturday, because "the evening and the morning" (Gen 1:5, *et. al.*) separated each day, not sunrise or 12:00 midnight. In many observant homes and synagogues two candles are lighted with prayer to mark the beginning and help establish the celebration. A Hebrew/Jewish calendar will give the time when each Shabbat begins. For computers I suggest the calendar available at [www.chabad.org/calendar/](http://www.chabad.org/calendar/).

## The Reward of Shabbat

Isaiah 58 has been an inspiration to many Believers, but it is interesting how the last verses have been ignored.

"If you hold back your foot on Shabbat from pursuing your own interests on my holy day; if you call Shabbat a delight, ADONAI's holy day, worth honoring; then honor it by not doing your usual things or pursuing your interests or speaking about them. If you do, you will find delight (*oneg*) in ADONAI - I will make you ride on the heights of the land and feed you with the heritage of your ancestor Ya'akov, for the mouth of ADONAI has spoken." (Isaiah 58:13,14)

Notice that according to the Prophet, the Lord's holy day is the seventh-day Shabbat.

Now connect the above with: “Then you will delight yourself in ADONAI, and he will give you your heart’s desire.” (Psalm 37:4)

Everyone wants to know how to get the Most High to give them the desires of their heart. Delight in ADONAI seems easy enough! There have been many fanciful interpretations of what it means to delight in ADONAI, but only one revelation of what this means is found in the Scriptures.

“Delight” in Psalm 37:4 is the Hebrew word *oneg*, which is defined “to treat as a delicacy.” There are very few places in the Scriptures where the word *oneg* is used. Yet, because it is a rarity, it will help us solve a mystery. There is one place, and only one, where it tells us exactly how to delight in ADONAI, even using the word *oneg*.

Here is the secret: Isaiah 58:13,14 is the only place where we are told by God what delighting in Him is. Any other interpretation for “delight yourself in ADONAI” is useless speculation and the imagination of men. The only way Scripture provides for anyone to delight in ADONAI is to honor and obey the seventh day Sabbath. The reward for doing this is “to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance” of Ya'akov. It is sealed as a promise from “the mouth of ADONAI.” Also, as it says in Psalms 37:4, the only way anyone is promised to receive the “desires of your heart” is by delighting in ADONAI. In other words, if you make His Sabbath a delight, *oneg*, a delicacy in your life, you will receive your heart’s desires.

It would seem that all people truly devoted to the Creator of Shabbat would make haste to honor the Shabbat of the Creator at all costs, considering the great payoff it carries! It would benefit anyone having a difficult time “riding high” in God’s favor to examine closely the practice of the Sabbath. Test it by getting this part of your life in line with God’s will, then see what will happen.

## About the Miqra, or Holy Community

Classical Christian theology teaches (and for 30 years I wrongly taught) that “the Church” is a new work of God, separate and totally distinct from Israel, that began in “the Upper Room” with the giving of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, and will continue on earth until “the Rapture,” at which time “the Church” is taken out of the world to avoid “the Tribulation,” while “Elect Israel” remains behind to “pass through the fire.”

“The church which is his body” began to be formed at Pentecost through the new ministries of the Spirit. Believers, at that time and through the baptism of the Spirit, became an organism by virtue of a divine life indwelling all, and that life was Christ. ... Thus, the formation of the body began at Pentecost and since that time the Lord has “added unto the church daily such as should be saved.” (Lewis Sperry Chafer)

“The Rapture occurs when the Church is caught up to meet Christ in the air, before the tribulation; ... at the Rapture, Christ comes as the Bridegroom to take unto Himself His bride, the Church. ... At the Rapture the Church, like Enoch, is taken out of the world. Jesus promises to keep the Church from, or (*ek*) out of this tribulation, ... The elect, a portion of Israel, will be gathered back to Jerusalem, and pass through the fire, or great trial. Like Enoch, the Church escapes from it.” (William E. Blackstone)

Contrary to classical Christian theology, I now believe there is only one true and universal Holy Community (the “Miqra” or “Called Out”, erroneously translated as “church” in most English Bibles), which is the Body and Bride of Yeshua HaMashiach, that it is a spiritual organism, of which Yeshua is the Head, and that it is made up of all the redeemed (“born again”) persons of all historical ages or epochs, including all the “righteous” of both Israel and of “the nations,” all of whom are included equally in the

Commonwealth of Israel, that is, the extended family of Avraham, Yitzhak, and Ya'akov.

I agree with the Sh'ma (Deut 6:4) which says: "Sh'ma, Yisra'el! ADONAI Eloheinu, ADONAI echad [Hear, Isra'el! ADONAI is our God, ADONAI is one]." I thus believe that Yeshua HaMashiach and Abba (the Father) are ADONAI *echad* (a plural unity). (See "About God"). Since the Tanakh clearly teaches that *Israel* is ADONAI's bride (Isa 49:18, Isa 61:10, Isa 62:5, Jer 2:2, Jer 2:32), and the Apostolic Scriptures teach that the *Miqra* is the bride of Yeshua HaMashiach (Eph 5:27, Rev 19:5-9), then *the Miqra must be the same as Israel*, who was first "married to" HaShem. In fact, in the Revelation of HaMashiach to Yochanan, HaShem says that *Yerushalayim* (Jerusalem) is the "bride of the Lamb" (Rev 21:9-27).

I believe that the establishment and continuity of local assemblies (also called congregations, synagogues, or erroneously "churches") is clearly taught and defined in the Ketuvei HaShalichim (the Apostolic Scriptures or erroneously-called "New Testament"), that the members of this one spiritual Body are directed by Adonai Yeshua to associate themselves together in local assemblies, which are to be true communities of believers, not just organizations, and that those local assemblies should willingly cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the "the faith which was once and for all passed on to God's people." (Jude 1:3)

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<sup>13</sup> There is much debate over the language that was spoken in Israel during the Second Temple Period and the language in which the Apostolic Scriptures were originally written. I hold that the primary language was Hebrew from the evidence of the Apostolic Scriptures themselves:

- Roman law required that charges against a condemned prisoner be publicly posted (a) in Latin, the official language of the empire, (b) in Greek, the lingua franca (language of commerce) of the empire, and

## Primacy of the Local Assembly

I believe in the absolute autonomy of the local assembly, composed solely of truly "born-again" believers, free from any external authority or control, with the right to be totally free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations outside of that local assembly. I believe that each local assembly, through its Zaqenim (Elders) and their interpretation and application of the Scriptures, is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation with other assemblies, as well being the sole judge of all matters of membership, policy, discipline, benevolence, and government (remembering that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation without the illumination of Ruach HaKodesh).

## Critical Definitions

Adonai Yeshua said in the language of the Hebrews,<sup>13</sup> "... on this rock I will build my miqra, and the gates of She'ol will not overcome it." (Matt. 16:18) When his words were translated into Greek, the word "*ekklesia*" was substituted for the Hebrew "*miqra*" that He actually spoke. A comparison of the two words will show the accuracy of that substitution.

ekkl hsi ***ekklesia*** — a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place, an assembly

a. an assembly of the people convened at the public place of the council for the purpose of deliberating

- (c) in the local dialect. The charges against Yeshua were posted in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew [ebraisti, Hebraisti] (John 19:20).
- The Apostolic Scriptures refer to several place-names, specifically stating that the place-names are being given in Hebrew (John 5:2, John 19:13, John 19:17, Rev 16:16).
- Yochanan says that Miriam of Magdala spoke to Yeshua in Hebrew at His tomb (Joh 20:16).
- Luke says that Rav Sha'ul addressed the mob at the Temple in Hebrew (Acts 21:40, Acts 22:2).
- Rav Sha'ul says that Yeshua spoke to him in Hebrew on the road to Damascus (Acts 26:14).

b. the assembly of the Israelites

**מִקְרָא *miqra*** — convocation, convoking, reading, a calling together

- a. convocation, sacred assembly
- b. convoking
- c. reading

(Source: BibleStudyTools.com/Lexicons/)

The inaccuracy of the common interpretation in the modern “church” comes not in the translation from Hebrew *miqra* into Greek *ekklesia*, but rather in the later translation of the Greek word *ekklesia* into English. It should be clearly understood that the use of the word “church” in the English “New Testament” has absolutely no valid linguistic reason or precedent beyond Gentile (specifically Roman Catholic) tradition (more below). It is a gross mistranslation of the Greek word *ecclesia*, which is a valid translation of the Hebrew word *miqra*, and which should be translated as either “called out” or “called out ones,” “assembly,” or “community.”

The word **מִקְרָא (*miqra*)** is repeatedly used in the Tenakh (the Hebrew Bible, erroneously called the “Old Testament”) to speak of the holy convocation or holy assembly of the faithful, particularly for the observance of the Feasts of ADONAI. The word is based on the root word **קָרָא (*qara*)** which means to call and commission or endow, to be chosen, or to be called out, or to be named. It is specifically used of those who are “called by the name of ADONAI” in 2Chron 7:14, Isa 43:7, and Acts 15:17. I therefore conclude that Yeshua’s true *Miqra* includes all the faithful of Israel both before and after His death and resurrection, into which holy assembly the believing Gentiles have been grafted or adopted.

“But if some of the branches were broken off, and you - a wild olive - were grafted in among them and have become equal sharers in the rich root of the olive tree, then don't boast as if you were better than the branches! However, if you do boast, remember that you are not supporting the root, the root is supporting you. So you will say,

“Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” True, but so what? They were broken off because of their lack of trust. However, you keep your place only because of your trust. So don't be arrogant; on the contrary, be terrified! For if God did not spare the natural branches, he certainly won't spare you! So take a good look at God's kindness and his severity: on the one hand, severity toward those who fell off; but, on the other hand, God's kindness toward you - provided you maintain yourself in that kindness! Otherwise, you too will be cut off! Moreover, the others, if they do not persist in their lack of trust, will be grafted in; because God is able to graft them back in. For if you were cut out of what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree! For, brothers, I want you to understand this truth which God formerly concealed but has now revealed, so that you won't imagine you know more than you actually do. It is that stoniness, to a degree, has come upon Israel, until the Gentile world enters in its fullness; and that it is in this way that all Israel will be saved. As the Tanakh says, “Out of Tziyon will come the Redeemer; he will turn away ungodliness from Ya'akov and this will be my covenant with them, . . . when I take away their sins.” (Romans 11:17-25 CJB)

Although it cannot be absolutely proven beyond doubt, there is significant evidence to be found that the modern English word “church” is either derived from or related to the Middle English word *chirche* or *kirke*, which is related to “circle,” which is in turn related to the name of the false goddess Circe, and refers to the practice of worshipping Circe while standing in a “circle.” (In Roman mythology, Circe and Odysseus had three

sons: Romus, Anteias, and Ardeias who respectively founded three cities called by their names: Rome, Antium, and Ardea.)

My personal research of the subject leads me to believe that in its later application during the centuries immediately before and after the birth of Messiah, the term also refers to the “inner circle” of priests of Roman version of the Babylonian Mystery Religion<sup>2</sup> which was the “official” state religion of Rome. (Apparently, this “inner circle” of priests stood in a “circle” to worship Circe, the mother of the founder of the city of Rome.) When Emperor Constantine, pontifex maximus (“supreme bridge” or high priest) of the Babylonian Mystery Religion blended early fourth-century Messianic Judaism (called “The Way”) with the Mystery Religion to create what he called “Christianity,” he named this “inner circle” of pagan priests as “bishops” over his unified apostate Roman religion. It is my considered opinion that this same group of pagan priests is now the College of Cardinals in the Roman Catholic Church. After creating “the Church,” Constantine continued on as pontifex maximus of the Mystery Religion, and although tradition says that he received “Christian baptism,” it was not until he was on his deathbed, and there is no evidence that he ever actually came to faith in Messiah.

Many within the Messianic Restoration object to the use of the word “church” to refer to true Believers in Messiah for three primary reasons:

- (1) there is absolutely no linguistic reason to have ever translated either the Hebrew word *miqra* or the Greek word *ecclesia* as “church” except in deference to the apostate Roman Church (thus, to call the assembly of Believers a “church” is to submit to the authority of the Pope, the successor to Constantine);
- (2) because of the pagan origin of the word and what it originally represented; and

- (3) because of the historical persecution of the Jews by the apostate Roman “Church” and its many descendants.

While I strongly agree with each of those three reasons, the primary reason that I personally object to the use of the word “church” to refer to any part of the Holy Community is that the only true function that the word serves is to perpetuate the singular error that for almost 1,700 years has been the primary dividing wedge separating Jewish and non-Jewish members of the Body of Messiah, that Israel and “the Church” are two separate entities.

I also strongly object to the blatantly anti-semitic practice of using the word “church” to either teach or support:

- a. any form of separation between Jewish and non-Jewish believers in Yeshua (the idea that the “church” and Israel are two separate entities is a foundational doctrine of Christian theology, and is taught by almost all Christian denominations; see the opening statements to this article by Chafer and Blackstone), or
- b. any form of supersessionism<sup>14</sup> or “replacement theology” in which the Gentile believers in Yeshua (the “church”) “replace” Israel in HaShem’s Plan of Redemption, or
- c. artificially elevating Gentile believers to an imagined position that is superior to HaShem’s elect people Israel.

I am firmly convinced that neither Yeshua HaMashiach nor the Shliachim intended to start a “new religion,” but rather only to fulfill, complete, and correct what was missing in the Judaism of the Second Temple Period. I therefore believe that the most valid form of worship is that practiced by Yeshua and His *talmidim* (disciples). I have therefore chosen to identify with that group of believers that is

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<sup>14</sup> Supersessionism, also called replacement theology, is a Christian doctrine which asserts that the New Covenant through Jesus Christ supersedes the Old

Covenant, which was made exclusively with the Jewish people.

known variously as “the Messianic Movement,” “Messianic Judaism,” or “Messianic Restoration.”

Furthermore, the Scriptures teach that under Messiah’s earthly reign, the Commonwealth of Israel will teach and lead the nations in the worship of HaShem in the Temple (Zech 8:19-23). If all Believers, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, will be following the Jewish style of worship in the Kingdom, does it make any sense to wait until then to do so?

I further believe that much of the conflict that exists between Jewish and non-Jewish Believers in Mashiach has been caused by anti-Semitic and anti-Gentile language that has crept into the household of faith.

For example, the word “Jesus” is nothing but a compounding of errors. Nobody who every knew Yeshua in the flesh ever referred to Him by that word. In fact, it is grammatically impossible to say that word in either Hebrew or Aramaic, as neither language has the “jay” sound.

When His name was transliterated from the Hebrew of the original Apostolic Scriptures into Greek for transmission to the Gentile and Greek-speaking Jewish Messianic Believers in the Diaspora, the name was rendered in Greek as “Iesu.” When the “church” became centered in Rome and the Greek Scriptures were translated into Latin, the Romans added an “s” on the end of His name (because virtually all masculine Latin words end in “s”) making it “Iesus.” Then the Germans came along during the Reformation and changed the “I” to a “J” making the word “Jesus.” And then the men who translated the Latin and German version of the Scriptures into English didn’t bother to correct the error.

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<sup>15</sup> If Adonai Yeshua HaMashiach is not HaShem, then the Apostolic Scriptures are a lie, “Jesus” and the Shliachim were all false prophets, and all Messianic believers (and Christians) since about 30 CE are guilty of idolatry for worshipping a mere mortal.

If Adonai Yeshua HaMashiach is in fact HaShem as the Scriptures clearly teach, then to call him “YAHshua” or “Fred” or “Barney” or “Jesus” (or “Jehovah” or “YAHovah” for that matter) is a violation of the Third Commandment.

It should also be noted that I know of no other work of literature in any language, besides the English Bible, that had made an attempt to “translate” personal names rather than simply rendering them phonetically.

In the meantime, as more and more Gentiles were brought into “Nazarene Judaism” (HaDerek, or “The Way”), Yeshua HaMashiach became thought of less and less as “Yeshua the Jewish Messiah” and more and more as “Jesus the ‘New Testament’ Gentile Christian God of love and forgiveness,” as distinctly contrasted from “Jehovah” of the “Old Testament” Who was a “fierce desert God of wrath and vengeance.”

As the Gentile “church” became more and more anti-Semitic and the persecutions against the Jews “in the name of Jesus” became increasingly severe, Jews around the world began to hate that word more and more, and for good reason. But just stop and think how difficult that persecution would have been if the Gentiles had remembered that they were nothing more nor less than “adopted” members of a distinctly Jewish sect. And how much more difficult it would have been to persecute Jews “in the name of” Yeshua, the Jewish Messiah.<sup>15</sup> (See also our discussion elsewhere on the word “Jehovah.”)

## Responsibility of the Miqra

I view the responsibilities of the Miqra to be as follows:

### 1. Our Responsibility Toward HaShem

I agree with the Westminster Shorter Catechism that “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.” I accomplish this

It makes absolutely no sense at all to nonchalantly speak of Him as “Jesus” and then carefully (often even superstitiously) avoid speaking “The Name” (יהוה, yud-heh-vav-hey) which is His. At the very least, it is totally disrespectful to address someone by the wrong name if you know their real name. Would you feel that you were being shown proper respect if someone insisted on calling you Enrique or François after learning that your name is Roger?

responsibility toward HaShem primarily by loving Him. When we truly love Him above all else, we will give Him our unquestioning obedience in all things. Our love and obedience will then glorify Him.

When one of the Scribes asked Yeshua HaMashiach, “Which *mitzvah*<sup>16</sup> is the greatest of all?” Mashiach answered, “The greatest is, ‘Hear, Yisra'el, the Lord our God, the Lord is one: you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first mitzvah. The second is like this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other mitzvah greater than these.” (Mark 12:28-31).

Anyone who does not love HaShem as Mashiach commanded is under the divine curse of HaShem. “If anyone does not love the Lord, a curse on him! Marana, ta! [Our Lord, come!]” (1Cor 16:22).

The Bible says that Yeshua HaMashiach became obedient to Torah (and to much, but not all, of the Oral Tradition) so that the Goyim<sup>17</sup> would glorify HaShem. “For I say that the Messiah became a servant of the Jewish people in order to show God’s truthfulness by making good his promises to the Patriarchs, and in order to show his mercy by causing the Gentiles to glorify God — as it is written in the Tanakh, ‘Because of this I will acknowledge you among the Gentiles and sing praise to your name.’” (Rom. 15:8-9)

The Bible says that because He has bought us out of bondage to sin, we should live to glorify Him: “... you were bought at a price. So use your bodies to glorify God.” (1Cor 6:20).

Adonai Yeshua said that if we love Him we will obey Him (John 3:36; 14:23,24), and the

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<sup>16</sup> מצוה *mitzvah* is Hebrew for “command,” “commandment,” “precept,” or by inference “good work.”

<sup>17</sup> גוי *goy* (plural, *goyim*) is Hebrew for “nation,” usually used for anyone who is not an Israelite, therefore “Gentiles.”

<sup>18</sup> ארץ ישראל *Eretz Yisrael* is Hebrew for “the Land of Israel.”

<sup>19</sup> Within Messianic Judaism there is considerable debate as to the form of the instrument upon which

Apostolic Writings confirm that we are to obey Him (Acts 5:29,32; Rom 2:8; 6:16; 2Thess 1:8; 3:14; Heb 5:9; 1Pet 1:2; 4:17). This glorifies HaShem (Rom 15:6).

The Bible says that we have become the Bride of Mashiach and that we will reign with Him forever (Rev 19:6-9; 21:1-22:7).

## 2. Our Responsibility Towards Torah

I believe that HaShem’s Torah is the one and only single standard of righteousness by which all mankind is to be judged, both in the present and in the *Olam Haba* (the world to come), and that all mankind, not just Israel, has an obligation to follow all of the commandments of Torah that can be followed (realizing that some of the commandments cannot be obeyed because they refer specifically to life within Eretz Yisra'el<sup>18</sup>, life under theocratic rule, and/or life in the presence of a Mishkan Kodesh [Holy Temple], or they apply to certain classes of individual, such as men only, women only, priests only, masters only, slaves only). Further, again contrary to classical Christian theology, I hold that Yeshua HaMashiach specifically commanded all Believers in Him to be obedient to Torah.

## 3. Our Responsibility Toward Our Family

Because HaShem created the family millennia before He created His Miqra, I believe that our responsibility toward our family comes second only to our responsibility toward HaShem. Yeshua set this model before us in that, as He hung dying on His cross<sup>19</sup> at Calvary, He committed the care of His mother into the hands of the Beloved Talmid.<sup>20</sup> HaShem’s Torah, which our Lord

Yeshua was executed. I happen to believe that the instrument was in the form of the traditional Roman cross with a crossbeam, but we view this as a matter of opinion rather than of doctrine. I find no fault with those who prefer the term “execution stake” as less offensive to Jewish persons.

<sup>20</sup> תלמיד *talmid* (plural, *talmidim*) is Hebrew for “scholar” or “disciple” — one who learns — specifically one who learns at the feet of another and who strives to become like the teacher.

declared is unchangeable, provides for strong family bonds and responsibilities. Our Lord taught that the man who fails to care for his family is worse than an infidel.

Concerning relationships within the Family, our Lord taught that Mashiach is the head of the husband and the husband is to be subject to Mashiach. He also taught that the husband is the head of the wife and the wife is to be subject to her husband (Eph 5:22-33; Col 3:18; 1Pet 3:1-6; Titus 2:5). The Bible teaches that the husband is to love his wife “just as Mashiach also loved the Miqra and gave Himself up for her,” and to treat her gently, “as a weaker vessel” (Eph 5:25-33; Col 3:19; 1Pet 3:7). The Bible also teaches that a husband and wife are to “become one flesh” (Gen 2:24; Eph 5:31).

The Bible teaches that children are to be obedient to their parents and honor them (Col 3:20; Eph 6:1-3). Fathers are not to exasperate their children or provoke them to anger “but [are to] bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Col 3:21; Eph 6:4). Parents are to instruct their children in the laws of HaShem “that they should put their confidence in HaShem, and not forget the works of HaShem, but keep His commandments.” Parents are also to teach their children the praises of the Lord, not just His judgments (Psalm 78:1-8; Deut 4:10; 6:4-9; 11:18-21).

In all the teachings and functions of our assemblies, therefore, we must commit that we will keep the family foremost, and that our families will be built on the sure foundation, which is Adonai Yeshua HaMashiach and His Word.

## 4. Our Responsibility Toward the Body of Mashiach

When speaking about the greatest of all *mitzvot* (commandments), Yeshua said, “The second is like this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other *mitzvah* greater than these.” (Mark 12:31). Yeshua

also said, “This is my command: that you keep on loving each other just as I have loved you. No one has greater love than a person who lays down his life for his friends. You are my friends, if you do what I command you. ... This is what I command you: keep loving each other!” (John 15:12-17). We are commanded to fervently love each other (1Pet 1:22; 4:8-9; 1John 3:11,23; 4:7-12; 2John 1:5).

This kind of love means placing others’ wellbeing before our own (Rom 12:10; Phil 2:3,4; 1Thess 3:11-13; 5:15).

We are to meet one another’s needs (Rom 12:13; 2Cor 9:11-14). We are to obey our spiritual leaders and submit to their authority over us (Heb 13:17). We are to be devoted to one another (Rom 12:10-13). We are to “pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another” (Rom 14:19-20). We are to “be of the same mind with one another according to Mashiach Yeshua” (Rom 15:6) and to accept one another (Rom 15:7). We are to admonish one another (Rom 15:14; Col 3:16).

We are to give honor to one another (1Cor 12:24-26; 1Thess 5:13). We are to “show forbearance to one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of Ruach HaKodesh<sup>21</sup> in the bond of peace” (Eph 4:1-6). We are to lay aside all falsehood and speak truth to each other (Eph 4:25; Col 3:9). We are to be kind and tenderhearted to each other (Eph 4:32). We are to forgive each other as HaShem in Mashiach forgave us (Eph 4:32; Col 3:12-15).

We are to submit to each other (Eph 5:21). We are to comfort one another (1Thess 4:17,18). We are to encourage one another (1Thess 5:11; Heb 3:13; 10:25). We are to build each other up (1Thess 5:11). We are to live in peace with each other (Rom 12:18; 1Thess 5:13). We are to “stimulate one another to love and good deeds” (Heb 10:24). We are to confess our sins to one another and pray for one another (James 5:16). We are to

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<sup>21</sup> רוח *ruach* is Hebrew for “wind,” “breath,” “mind,” or “spirit,” and often refers to the Spirit of God. רוח הקודש *Ruach HaKodesh* is Hebrew for “the Holy Spirit.”

serve each other (1Pet. 4:10). We are to act humbly toward each other (1Pet 5:5-6). We are to have fellowship with each other (1John 1:7; Heb 10:25).

We are not to judge one another or to put obstacles or stumbling blocks in each other's way (Rom 14:13). There are to be no divisions among us (1Cor 12:25). We are not to "bite" one another (Gal 5:13-16). We are not to become boastful, challenge one another, or envy one another (Gal. 5:26). We are not to repay evil with evil (1Thess 5:15). We are not to forsake our own synagogue (Heb 10:25). We are not to complain or speak against each other (James 4:11; 5:9; 1Pet 4:8-9).

## 5. Our Responsibility Toward the Lost

At His ascension, Mashiach gave His Shliachim<sup>22</sup> the following Commission: "Going, therefore, make talmidim of all the goyim, immersing them in the name of Abba,<sup>23</sup> and of HaBen,<sup>24</sup> and of Ruach HaKodesh,<sup>25</sup> teaching them to observe all things that I commanded you ..." (Matt 28:19-20, literal). He also told them, "But you will receive power when Ruach HaKodesh has come upon you. You will be witnesses to me in Yerushalayim,<sup>26</sup> in all Yehudah<sup>27</sup> and Shomron,<sup>28</sup> and to the uttermost parts of the earth." (Acts 1:8). I believe that commission, in its primary application, was given directly to the Shliachim and that they literally fulfilled that commission prior to their deaths before the end of the first century.

However, I believe that the principles of our Lord's instructions are clear, and that those principles apply to the local assembly today. They require us, as ambassadors for Mashiach, to carry on the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18-21) by taking every opportunity to present the Gospel (Good News) of Yeshua

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<sup>22</sup> משלח *Shliachim* is Hebrew for "those sent forth" or "emissaries," and signifies a person who is sent forth as a representative with the full authority of the one doing the sending. The Greek equivalent is *apostolos* or *Apostolos* from which we get the word "Apostles."

<sup>23</sup> אב *Ab* is Hebrew for "Father." אבבא *Abba* is Hebrew for "Daddy" or "Papa."

HaMashiach and His Kingdom to a lost and dying world.

Grammatically, the imperative (the mitzvah or command) is to "make talmidim" (students who follow the teaching they are given and strive to become like their teacher). "Going," "immersing," and "teaching" are all participles, which means that they describe how We are to make talmidim. The Lord's command to His Miqra is clear: We are to make talmidim wherever I can. And We are to make talmidim by going, immersing, and teaching.

### a. We are to Make Talmidim

A talmid (plural, *talmidim*) is one who sits under the teaching of another, and who strives to become like the teacher. As we lead the lost to Mashiach for salvation, we are to lead them to a local assembly of believers for their growth and nurturing in the Word of HaShem. If we fail in this area, we may possibly have made a convert, but we have failed to make a *talmid*.

### b. We are to Make Talmidim by Going

There is no provision for us to wait for the lost to come to us. That is, we are not to make talmidim by inviting the unsaved to our worship service! We are proactively to seek ways and opportunities to present the Gospel of HaShem's Grace to the lost. We are to "Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel them to come in, that My house may be filled" (Luke 14:23). The "Lord's house" is not the building in which the local assembly meets, but rather it is the family of HaShem that is in mind.

### c. We are to Make Talmidim by Immersing

Those whom we lead to a relationship with Adonai Yeshua HaMashiach, we are to make

<sup>24</sup> הבן *HaBen* is Hebrew for "the Son."

<sup>25</sup> רוח הקדש *Ruach HaKodesh* is Hebrew for "the Holy Spirit."

<sup>26</sup> ירושלים *Yerushalayim* is Hebrew for "City of Peace" or "Jerusalem."

<sup>27</sup> יהודה *Yehudah* is Hebrew for "Judah."

<sup>28</sup> שמרון *Shomron* is Hebrew for "Samaria."

talmidim. One of the first steps of becoming a talmid is obedience to the Lord's instruction that talmidim are to be made by being immersed. As the lost are won to Yeshua, it is our responsibility to make talmidim of them by immersing them.

### **c. We are to Make Talmidim by Teaching**

We are then commanded to be teaching them all those things that were taught by our Lord and by His Shliachim. We know this instruction as "the Apostles' Doctrine" or the "Doctrine of the Shliachim" which has been given "for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Mashiach; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of HaShem, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Mashiach" (Eph 4:12-13).

## **6. Our Responsibility Toward Israel**

I believe that Israel has been elected by HaShem out of all of the families of man to be His chosen people, to serve as an example to the world of His love, compassion, providence, and righteous judgment. Moreover, HaShem chose Avraham and his descendants to be the human family from which His own Son, Adonai Yeshua HaMashiach ("the LORD Jesus Christ") would be born after the flesh, to be Israel's Messiah and our Redeemer.

I believe that, although a great many individual Israelites immediately received the Good News of Mashiach and became His talmidim, corporate Israel (that is, the political nation of Israel, not the Jewish people) fell from her exalted position among the nations of the world because of her repeated idolatry and her *corporate* rejection of Mashiach when He first appeared. Therefore, HaShem allowed the destruction of the Temple and the dispersion of political Israel throughout the

nations of the world, and allowed Eretz Yisra'el (the Land of Israel) to be overrun by the Gentile nations (the Goyim) for a period of time known as "the time of the Goyim." This was a temporary exile from which HaShem promised to call forth His people at the end "the time of the Goyim." I believe that the establishment of the modern State of Israel in 1948 marked the end of "the time of the Goyim," and that He is now returning His People to their Land, from which they will never again be exiled.

I believe that HaShem has made numerous unilateral, unconditional, and eternally irrevocable covenants with the household of Abraham, many of which have not yet been fulfilled, and that because of His unchangeable nature He is faithful to fulfill all His promises. I therefore accept as self-evident that HaShem is not yet finished with His chosen race. They will again live corporately in fellowship with and obedience to Him, and in peace and safety within the geographical boundaries of their ancestral home, Eretz Yisra'el, under the Kingship of His Messiah Yeshua.

I specifically and categorically reject as heretical the dogma known as "Replacement Theology" which teaches that "the Church" has replaced Israel in HaShem's plan, and that Israel has been temporarily "set aside" in favor of the Gentiles.

I believe that the Miqra, the Body of Mashiach, properly understood, is thoroughly Jewish. Mashiach and all His Talmidim were Torah-observant Jews who worshipped in the Temple and in the synagogues throughout Eretz Yisrael and the Diaspora.<sup>29</sup>

The Bible, including the TaNaKh and the Apostolic Writings, is a thoroughly Jewish book, written by Jews, about Jews, to a Jewish audience, about the Jewish Messiah, in the Jewish language.

Yeshua told the Samaritan woman that salvation is from the Jews (John 4:22), and Sha'ul wrote that "the Good News of Messiah,

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<sup>29</sup> The Diaspora, or dispersion, refers to all Israelites (physical descendants of Avraham, Yitzhak, and Ya'akov) living outside of Eretz Yisrael.

... is the power of HaShem for salvation for everyone who believes; for the Yehudi [Jews] first, and also for the Yevanit [Greeks, or Gentiles]" (Romans 1:16).

Furthermore, while there were certainly some non-Jewish believers in the first century, I believe that the clear historical record is that the Miqra was predominately, if not almost exclusively, Jewish for the first hundred years after the Resurrection of Yeshua HaMashiach.

Those pagan Gentiles in Europe and Asia who came to faith in Mashiach during the first century after His resurrection were all thoroughly indoctrinated into Jewish faith and lifestyle, and were brought into the local Jewish synagogues, where they were taught *halakha*, the Jewish lifestyle according to Torah.<sup>30</sup>

It was not until the Bar Kokhba rebellion in approximately 132-135 CE that Jewish Believers in Mashiach separated themselves from the synagogue, and then only because Chief Rabbi Akiva declared that Bar Kokhba, and not Yeshua, was the Mashiach. Until the time of Emperor Constantine there was never a question of "how does a Jew become a 'Christian?'" The question was, rather, "how is it possible for a Gentile believer to become a follower of the Jewish Messiah without first becoming a Jew?"

I believe, therefore, that the true nature of the Miqra, HaShem's "Called-Out Ones," now known as the Body of Mashiach (erroneously and ignorantly called "the church"), is as it has ever been since the call of the nation out of the land of Egyptian bondage, to be the faithful remnant of Israel, and that for a non-Jew to be a part of that Body he/she must be adopted into the family of Israel.

"Thus says ADONAI of Hosts: 'In those days, ten men will take hold, out of all the languages of the

nations, they will take hold of the skirt [literally, take hold of the tzitziot (fringes) of the tallit (prayer shawl)] of him who is a Yehudi, saying, "I will go with you, for I have heard that HaShem is with you.'" (Zechariah 8:23)

I believe that Gentile Believers in Mashiach are heirs to salvation and to the wonderful promises of HaShem *only* because HaShem has seen fit to adopt them into Abraham's family, Israel, who alone are the rightful heirs of those covenants (Romans 11). Those who are Gentile Believers in Mashiach therefore own an un-payable debt of gratitude to those who are the sons of Avraham after the flesh, and owe it to Israel and to our Lord Yeshua to do all within their power to lovingly lead those Israelites who do not know their Messiah into faith in, and obedience to, Him, thus to resume their rightful place as the "Light to the Nations."

Additionally, when Mashiach returns to establish His earthly kingdom, all nations of the earth will be judged by the way they have treated corporate Israel (Matt 25:31-46). Therefore, even more is there an obligation to treat all Israel righteously, for they are the brethren of our own dear Lord Yeshua, and it is the Gentiles who have been adopted into their family.

## Authority in the Miqra

I believe that the one and only supreme authority for the Miqra is Adonai Yeshua HaMashiach, and that the order, discipline, and worship are appointed through His sovereignty. As I believe the Bible to be the literal written Word of God and the only true and reliable source of His revelation for His Miqra, I hold the Bible to be the ultimate and final source of authority for all matters of faith, practice, and polity.

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<sup>30</sup> They were brought into the fellowship of the synagogue, given basic instruction in Jewish civility, and taught the Torah of Moses. "Therefore it is my [Ya'akov, Yeshua's brother] judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, but that we write to them that they abstain

from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood. *For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath.*" (Acts 15:19-21, emphasis added)

I believe that the Biblically designated shepherds serving immediately under Yeshua and directly over the congregation are called Elders, Overseers, or Pastors, and that these three titles are properly used interchangeably. I understand that the term “Elder” refers to the man’s spiritual maturity and position within the family of God, “Overseer” refers to his responsibility and God-ordained authority to rule benevolently over the family of God, and “Pastor” refers to his shepherding responsibility to lead, guide, feed, protect, and care for the well-being of the children of God, to whom the Lord Yeshua referred as His “sheep.” I believe that Elders are called, ordained, and specially equipped by God for His ministry, and that they are spiritual gifts given by God to the Miqra.

The term Rabbi is the Hebrew word for a Teacher and refers primarily to the office of Pastor/Teacher, but technically is reserved for those specifically trained in Hebrew jurisprudence.

## Leadership in the Miqra

I specifically reject any idea of apostolic or prophetic succession through which the offices of Apostle and Prophet are present in the Miqra today in the technical sense of those titles. I do, however believe in the continuance of all four functions fulfilled by the Elders as recorded in Ephesians 4:11, namely:

**Apostles** (in the generic sense), which I understand to refer to Traveling Elders, those elders whom God has called to travel from place to place as messengers or missionaries.

**Prophets** (also in the generic sense), or Preaching Elders, whom God has called to specialize in preaching the Word of God

**Evangelists**, those Elders who have been called to specialize in presenting the Gospel (the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Adonai Yeshua) to the unsaved, or “Gospelizing” Elders.

**Pastor/Teachers**, those Elders whom God has called to fulfill a shepherding ministry over a local assembly of believers, also called

Shepherding Elders or Ruling Elders. In Messianic congregations this person is generally referred to as Rabbi if he is ethnically Jewish, and Pastor if he is not ethnically Jewish. This is a matter of tradition, not of Scripture.

I believe that the pattern clearly established in the Bible is that there are to be multiple Elders in every local congregation. The number of Elders is not specified in Scripture, but I believe that there should be a sufficient number of Elders to effectively meet the spiritual needs of the congregation and to efficiently conduct the ministry of the Miqra.

As the first-century synagogue, from which we are descended, had as their rule a minimum of three Rabbis to serve as “beit din” (literally, house of judgment; those who had to make halakhic and legal decisions for their community), I believe that three should be the minimum number of Elders for each local assembly. I believe that the duties of the Elders include, but are not limited to, the following activities defined in Scripture:

- Their primary duty is to give themselves fully to study, prayer, and the ministry of God’s word (that is, as their full-time occupation whenever possible).
- They are to lead God’s people by their example in word, conduct, love, spirit, faith, and purity.
- They are to benevolently rule over the local congregation of Believers and, when necessary, they are to rebuke and exhort with all authority.
- They are not to be dictatorial in their leadership, but are to be to the congregation as a loving father is to his family.
- They are to equip the saints to do the work of ministry.
- They are to pray for the sick and visit those in their time of need.
- They are to oversee the entire ministry, willingly and eagerly, knowing that when Messiah the chief Shepherd appears they shall receive a “crown of glory that does not fade away.”

I believe that all Elders must initially meet and then maintain rigid spiritual qualifica-

tions, and that God will hold them strictly accountable for both their actions and their attitudes as leaders over His Miqra.

Elders are called and specifically gifted by God (Eph 4:11-13) for a lifetime of service to Him and to His people (Rom 11:29).

They are to be appointed for the congregation by the other Elders (Titus 1:5), and never elected or “hired” by the congregation.

If a spiritually qualified man, believing that He has been called by God, expresses his desire (1Tim 3:1) to commit himself to a lifetime of service as an Elder, his abilities, qualifications, and knowledge of the Apostles’ doctrine (1Tim 3:2-7; Titus 1:5-9), as well as the fact of his calling, must be carefully examined by the Elders. After careful examination of the candidate, extensive prayer, and thorough deliberation by the Elders (1Tim 3:2-7; Titus 1:5-14; 1Tim 3:10; 1Tim 5:22), having determined the candidate’s call, willingness, and ability to enter a lifetime of service, the Elders may appoint and ordain the candidate as an Elder, thus providing confirmation to both the local congregation and to the Miqra at large of the LORD’s ordination of the new Elder.

## Activities of the Miqra

I believe that the four essential continual activities of the community of faith are to be (Acts 2:42):

- (1) Devotion to the apostles’ teaching,
- (2) Constant fellowship both at and away from the meeting place,
- (3) The breaking of bread (frequent communal fellowship meals), and
- (4) Prayer without ceasing.

I believe that personal evangelism, spiritual, and numerical growth of the assembly will be the inescapable result of these activities.

I believe that Messiah has established two memorial ordinances which are to be faithfully and frequently observed by the Miqra until His bodily return: *tevilah* (ritual immersion) in a *mikvah* and the so-called “Lord’s

Supper,” which is actually the Passover Seder.

## Tevilah or Water Baptism

Inasmuch as I believe that the clear teaching of Scripture is that salvation is by grace through faith apart from any form of works, I therefore believe that the act of *tevilah*, or water baptism, is in no way a condition of salvation, nor any part of the salvation process, but is rather, for the Believer in Messiah Yeshua, a memorial of His death, burial, and resurrection, and an outward demonstration of the inner change — the irrevocably positioning of the Believer by Ruach HaKodesh into the mystical Body of Messiah with its resultant salvation and positional justification — which has already taken place in the life and heart of the Believer.

In the Levitical system established by God for the spiritual leadership of Israel, all priests were “ordained” to their office at the age of 30 by immersing themselves in water in a special ceremonial pool of “living water” called a *mikvah*. This process was called *tevilah*, and was performed under the authority of God’s prophet in office at the time. When Messiah Yeshua was 30 years of age he approached the only living prophet of God at the time, his cousin Yochanan the Immerser (John the Baptist) to perform the *tevilah* for His formal entrance into the priesthood. (See Matthew 3:13-15.)

Messiah has established His Body as a Royal Priesthood and has commanded that all members of that priesthood should undergo their own *tevilah* for entrance into that priesthood. It is the responsibility of all His people to be obedient to His command.

I recognize the right of each Believer under grace to disagree with me on any doctrine that is not essential to salvation and, having defined *tevilah* as not essential to salvation, I defend the right and responsibility of each Believer to decide for him/herself whether to be obedient to that ordinance.

Nevertheless, since I believe that this *tevilah* is to be the newly-born-again Believer’s first public act of obedience to Adonai Yeshua, I urge in the strongest possible

terms that all Believers who have not previously done so submit to this ordinance in obedience to ADONAI.

## The Lord's Seder

In ancient Jewish tradition, it is the date of a person's death that is memorialized rather than the date of one's birth. I believe that the so-called "Lord's Supper" is an acted-out memorial "drash" (sermon or teaching) established by Messiah at His final Passover Seder. I believe that when Messiah told His disciples to "Do this as a memorial to me" (1Cor 11:24-25) He was referring to the *entire Passover Seder*, not just the loaf and cup alone. I therefore believe that all Messianic Believers, both Jewish and non-Jewish, have an obligation to observe Passover in its Messianic context. As an integral part of the Passover Seder, this memorial ceremony looks back on His life and death, and looks forward to His soon return.

## Stewardship

I believe that the rule for giving the in Miqra is twofold:

- (1) That the work of the ministry be adequately supported; and
- (2) That the needy be provided for.

I believe that giving within the Body of Messiah is therefore to be done:

- (1) Cheerfully
- (2) In proportion to God's prospering (Gen 14:20; Gen 28:22; Lev 27:30,32; Deut 12:6,7,11; Deut 14:22,23)
- (3) Into a private fund ("put aside") at home (1Cor 16:2) from which fund the Believer makes distributions according to the direct leading of Ruach HaKodesh; and
- (4) Presented to the Elders regularly when the congregation meets to celebrate Shabbat

Every Believer should be a faithful steward of all his/her resources (time, talent, Spiritual gifts, finances, and other material possessions) for the support of the local assembly and the furtherance of the Gospel

at home and abroad. I believe that the example established in the Apostolic Scriptures, and that which we are to follow, is that the congregation is to deliver their gifts to the Elders for distribution according to the direction of the Lord. I further believe that a Believer relinquishes all rights to direct the use of the tithe or offering once the gift has been made.

Inasmuch as the primary responsibility of the Elders is to give themselves fully to study, prayer, and the ministry of God's word, I believe that it is God's plan for them to earn their living from that activity (Num 18:21,24; Luke 10:7-8; 1Cor 9:14; 1 Tim 5:17-18) to the fullest extent that the congregation is able to provide.

## Civil Government

I believe that God has ordained all authority consisting of three basic institutions: (1) the home; (2) the Miqra; and (3) the State. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the Miqra, and the State are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblical spheres of responsibility under God.

I categorically reject as totally unbiblical the false and arbitrary concept which is commonly referred to as "the separation of Church and state" as it is commonly interpreted by our federal, state, and local governments.

I believe that the only true form of government that is acceptable to God is a Theocracy. I embrace the literal and historical interpretation of the founding documents of the United States of America, and the obvious intention of the founders of this country, that the only valid government is that government

whose God is the LORD, the God of Avraham, Yitzhak, and Ya'akov.<sup>31</sup>

Further, I reject as totally false and Satan-inspired the interpretation of the First Amendment by the United States Supreme Court that there is to be a “wall of separation between the Church and the State,” and I support the obvious intention of the literal wording of that Amendment which provides for the protection of the Miqra of Yeshua HaMashiach from any interference by secular government.

I therefore believe that the Body of Yeshua owes allegiance to the civil government in all areas except those which infringe upon our allegiance to our Savior and only Sovereign Lord Yeshua HaMashiach and to our obedience to His clear commands, precepts, and principles.

## Discipline

I believe that the Bible requires the Elders of the Community to lovingly discipline the children of God for the purpose of their instruction and restoration to full fellowship. I also believe that the Scriptures clearly teach that the Elders are to stand firm against all forms of false doctrine and to firmly rebuke those who would lead the Elect astray.

Discipline within the Body of Mashiach is a very serious matter and one not to be taken lightly or entered into without extensive and agonizing prayer. However, inasmuch as the Miqra is required by her Lord to remain an example of purity and integrity before the world, He has commanded that there be no sin found within His Bride. Disciplinary action is to be undertaken only as a last resort, and must only and always be conducted with the goal of restoring an erring member to full fellowship.

### A. Disciplinary Procedure

The procedure to be followed is to be in accordance with the Lord's teaching as found in Matthew 18:15-17.

1. All members of the assembly are expected to demonstrate special loyalty and due concern for one another. When a member becomes aware of an offense of such magnitude that it hinders the spiritual growth and testimony of another member of the congregation or of the congregation as a whole, he/she is to go alone directly to the offending party and seek to restore his/her brother/sister. Before he/she goes, he/she should first examine him/herself, then go with a spirit of humility and have the goal of restoration. The matter is to be handled with absolute privacy and confidentiality, with due regard for the reputation, feelings, and well-being of the offending party.
2. If reconciliation is not reached, a second attempt should be made to resolve the matter in the presence of two or three witnesses. This second step should also be preceded by self-examination and exercised in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration, again with absolute privacy and confidentiality, and with due regard for the reputation, feelings, and well-being of the offending party.
3. If the matter is still unresolved after steps 1 and 2 have been taken, the matter is to be brought directly to the attention of the Elders by all persons involved in steps 1 and 2, without involving or informing any other person.
4. At the sole discretion of the Elders, the offending party may be required to appear before the Elders to answer the accusation. If such action is deemed necessary by the Elders, all the accusers shall also be present at such appearance.
5. If the matter remains unresolved after steps 1 through 4 have been completed, the member who refuses to repent and be restored is to be expelled from the

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<sup>31</sup> For example: “Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.” (John Adams)

congregation upon the unanimous decision of the Elders, and their decision is to be announced to the congregation. In any event, the decision of the Elders must be unanimous and shall be final.

6. If an unrepentant offending party is expelled from the congregation, all contact with him/her from that point forward by the members of the congregation (except for that of family members) must be for the sake of restoration.

In the event that it becomes necessary for any person to be expelled from membership, the Elders shall see that every reasonable effort is made toward total restitution and reconciliation.

## B. Restoration Procedure

Every effort must be made at every point in the disciplinary procedure to effect total restoration. If at any point either during or following the procedure, the offending party confesses and repents of his/her wrongdoing and makes an appropriate attempt at restitution with the offended party or parties, the matter shall immediately considered closed and the offending party immediately restored to full fellowship.

## Missions

I believe that God has given the Holy Community a Great Commission to proclaim the Gospel, to the Jew first and then to all Gentiles, so that there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe in the LORD Yeshua HaMashiach. As ambassadors of Messiah we must use all available means to go both to this nation and to the foreign nations with the Gospel of Yeshua HaMashiach.

## Denominationalism

I believe that there is only one true and universal Miqra of Yeshua HaMashiach. I believe that within the Body of Messiah there is room for differences of opinion concerning nonessential doctrines and Miqra polity, and

that Messianic Believers of similar preferences in the nonessential areas should fellowship together.

However, We are firmly convinced that any form of strife, jealousy, or spirit of unhealthy competition, or any form of divisiveness either within or between any congregations of the LORD's Elect is an abomination before the LORD.

See also: Messianic Conversion, below.

## About Israel

I believe that Israel has been elected by HaShem out of all of the families of man to be His chosen people, to serve as an example to the world of His love, compassion, providence, and righteous judgment, and to lead all the nations (goyim) into faith in HaShem. Moreover, HaShem chose Avraham and his descendants to be the human family from which His own Son, Adonai Yeshua HaMashiach, would be born after the flesh, to be Israel's Messiah and the Redeemer of all who would come to Him.

## The People

I believe that although many individual Israelites (many "myriads"<sup>32</sup> — as much a third of the population, including many of the *kohenim*, priests) immediately received the Good News of Mashiach and became His talmidim, corporate Israel (that is, the political nation of Israel, not the Jewish people) fell from her exalted position among the nations of the world because of her repeated idolatry and her *corporate* rejection of Mashiach when He first appeared. Therefore, HaShem allowed the destruction of the Temple and the dispersion of political Israel throughout the nations of the world, and allowed Eretz Yisra'el (the Land of Israel) to be overrun by the Gentile nations (the Goyim) for a period of time known as "the time of the Goyim."

This was a temporary exile from which HaShem promised to call forth His people at the end "the time of the Goyim." I believe that the establishment of the modern State of Israel

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<sup>32</sup> Myriad is the Greek word for ten thousand.

in 1948 marked the end “the time of the Goyim,” and that He is now returning His People to their Land, from which they will never again be exiled.

## The Covenants

I believe that HaShem has made numerous unilateral, unconditional, and eternally irrevocable covenants with the household of Abraham, many of which have not yet been fulfilled, and that because of His unchangeable nature He is faithful to fulfill all His promises. I therefore accept as self-evident that HaShem is not yet finished with His chosen race. They will again live corporately in fellowship with and obedience to Him, and in peace and safety within the geographical boundaries of their ancestral home, Eretz Yisra'el, under the Kingship of His Messiah Yeshua. I specifically and categorically reject as heretical the dogma known as “Replacement Theology” which teaches that “the Church” has replaced Israel in HaShem’s plan, and that Israel has been temporarily “set aside” in favor of the Gentiles.

## The Land

I believe that HaShem owns all the land of the world, and that kings, potentates, and nations occupy that land only with HaShem's permission, and that He gives and revokes that permission according to His sovereign will. I believe that HaShem explicitly gave to Avraham, Yitzhak, Ya'akov, and to all their descendants forever an irrevocable and eternal land grand of all the territory from “the river of Egypt” (the Nile River) to the Euphrates River, and that land was then, as it is now, Israel’s irrevocable possession.

I therefore believe that almost of all of Eretz Yisra'el is being illegally occupied by the nations of Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. The dark black border on this map indicates the territory that HaShem gave as an eternal land grant to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov, and to their

descendants forever as an everlasting covenant. It also marks the territory that the United States and the United Nations are trying to steal from Israel and give to the Muslims. HaShem says that He will not permit this, and that he will “curse” anyone who tries to make it happen. If implemented, America’s “Road Map for Peace” may very well cause the downfall and destruction of the United States of America as we now know it.



1. Israel's territory currently occupied by Lebanon
2. Israel's territory currently occupied by Syria
3. Israel's territory currently occupied by Iraq
4. Israel's territory currently occupied by Kuwait
5. Israel's territory currently occupied by Saudi Arabia
6. Israel's territory currently occupied by Jordan
7. Israel's territory currently occupied by Egypt

## The Palestinian Conflict

As Israel owns all the land from the Nile to the Euphrates, anyone besides Israel who lives on any part of that land is an illegal occupying force, and HaShem has given Israel both the right and the responsibility to drive them out.

“I will drive them out before you little by little, until you become fruitful and take possession of the land. I will fix your boundary from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines {Mediterranean}, and from the wilderness to the River {Euphrates;} for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you will drive them out before you. You shall make no covenant with them or with their gods. They shall not live in your land, because they will make you sin against Me; for {if} you serve

their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.” (Exodus 23:30-33)

Any nation who resists Israel in their God-given responsibility of governing all of their land is not resisting Israel, but rather they are resisting the God of Israel!

“Now ADONAI said to Avram, ‘Get yourself out of your country, away from your kinsmen and away from your father’s house, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, I will bless you, and I will make your name great; and you are to be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, but I will curse anyone who curses you; and by you all the families of the earth will be blessed.’” (Genesis 12:1-3)

“How lovely are your tents, Ya'akov; your encampments, Isra'el! They spread out like valleys, like gardens by the riverside, like succulent aloe planted by ADONAI, like cedar trees next to the water. Water will flow from their branches, their seed will have water aplenty. Their king will be higher than Agag and his kingdom lifted high. [HaShem], who brought them out of Egypt, gives them the strength of a wild ox. They will devour the nations opposing them, break their bones, pierce them with their arrows. When they lie down they crouch like a lion, or like a lioness — who dares to rouse it? Blessed be all who bless you! Cursed be all who curse you!” (Numbers 24:5-9)

I believe that most of the natural disasters and calamities that have occurred in the United States over the past few decades have been the direct result of America’s actions against the sovereign State of Israel and against the God of Israel. I believe that HaShem repays “measure for measure” (Exod 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deut 19:21; Matt 7:2; Luke 6:38). When America forces Israeli citizens off their land and into refugee camps, HaShem

sends hurricanes to America to force American citizens off their land and into refugee camps. Measure for measure!

## The Return of Messiah

I believe that the world will experience the seven years of strife and tribulation known as “Ya'akov’s Trouble” and that the return of Yeshua HaMashiach will be related to that strife. However, I am not convinced that Scripture clearly indicates whether His return will be before, during, or after that period.

I believe in the literal and physical return of Adonai Yeshua HaMashiach to the earth just as He went, in Person and in the body in which He was crucified, now glorified, coming on the clouds of heaven, with all His Saints, and with power and great glory to establish His earthly Kingdom, to bind HaSatan and place him in the abyss, to lift the curse which now rests on the whole creation, to restore a united Israel to her own land and to give her the realization of every single element and every single provision of HaShem’s covenant promises, to bring the whole world to the personal knowledge of HaShem, and to personally and bodily reign over the whole earth for a thousand years from His throne in Jerusalem.

I believe that when Messiah returns to rule from His throne in Jerusalem, Israel will resume her rightful place as an example of righteousness and a “light to the Goyim.”

“Thus says ADONAI of Hosts: ‘In those days, ten men will take hold, out of all the languages of the nations, they will take hold of the skirt [literally, take hold of the tzitziot (fringes) of the tallit (prayer shawl)] of him who is a Yehudi, saying, “I will go with you, for I have heard that HaShem is with you.”’” (Zechariah 8:23)

Additionally, when Mashiach returns to establish His earthly kingdom, all nations of the earth will be judged by the way they have treated corporate Israel (Matt. 25:31-46).

I believe that both the Temple and the Aaronic Priesthood will be completely restored, that the sacrifices will be practiced as a memorial reminder that our redemption has come only through the shed Blood of the Lamb, and that all the nations of the world will come to the Temple in Jerusalem to observe the Feasts of HaShem (particularly Sukkot, which is Yeshua's "birthday party") under the tutelage of their teacher Israel. Further, I specifically believe that the advent of "Messianic Judaism," which coincided with Israel's liberation of Jerusalem in the Six-Day War in 1967, is the beginning of the process of the goyim placing themselves under that tutelage.

I believe that King David, resurrected and glorified, will reign over Israel as Mashiach's co-regent, and that Father Avraham, resurrected and glorified, will rule over all Eretz Yisra'el from the Nile River in the west to the Euphrates River in the east.

## 12. About Messianic Gentiles

Messianic Gentiles are biblically and prophetically part of Israel. The term "Gentile" is used here not in any derogatory sense at all, but only to refer to those who are not of Jewish ancestry on either the mother's or the father's side, and because that is what non-Jewish people are called in popular speech. Technically, Messianic Believers who are not Jewish, but who are part of Israel by faith, cannot be "Gentile," for one cannot technically be "Gentile" and a part of Israel at the same time. In Scripture, the Gentiles were pagans or heathens. Messianic Believers should therefore no longer think of themselves as Gentiles, but as Israelites — full citizens of the Commonwealth of Israel.

I completely and absolutely reject the idea of "British Israelism" and the resulting Ephraimite ("two-house" or "two stick") heresy.

## Gathering of the Gentiles to Israel

"Neither let the son of the foreigner, that has joined himself to ADONAI, speak, saying, ADONAI has utterly separated me from His people..." (Isaiah 56:3)

"Also the sons of the foreigner, that join themselves to ADONAI, to serve him, and to love the name of ADONAI, to be his servants, everyone who keeps the shabbat from polluting it, and takes hold of My covenant, even those I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon My altar, for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all people. ADONAI Elhohim who gathers the outcasts of Israel says, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered to him." (Isaiah 56:6-8)

The term *nekar* (foreigner) is used of the Gentiles throughout Scriptures. The Gentile who has joined himself to Adonai is not to even say that he is separated from His people Israel. Notice that these foreigners are gathered to Israel, and they are sabbath-keepers. Yeshua quotes the latter part of this scripture in His cleansing of the Temple. In context, this shows that the "house of prayer for all people" is for those who are gathered to Israel only.

## Attachment of Righteous Gentiles to Righteous Jews

"Yes, many people and strong nations shall come to seek Adonai of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before ADONAI. Thus declares ADONAI of Hosts, In those days ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, they even shall take hold of the garment [talit] of the one who is a Jew, saying, I will go with you, for I have heard that Elohim is with you." (Zechariah 8:22,23)

The Scriptures leave absolutely no doubt that righteous Jews are to lead righteous Gentiles by example into the proper expression of worship toward ADONAI, “for salvation is of the Jews.” This is the opposite of the backwards way it has been attempted for the past 17 centuries or so. If righteous Jews and righteous Gentiles may pray together before ADONAI, then they are in possession of the same covenant.

## **Prophecy to Israel Fulfilled by Messianic Gentiles**

“Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, You are not my people, there it shall be said to them, You are the sons of the living Elohim. Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel.” (Hosea 1:10-11)

“Even us, whom He [ADONAI] has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As He says also in Hosea, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, You are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living Elohim.” (Romans 9:24-26)

## **Messianic Gentiles are Part of the “Holy Nation”**

“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His possession, that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His

marvelous light, who in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.” (1Peter 2:9-10)

Here Kefa (Peter) uses the same prophecy of Hosea to show that Messianic Believers, whether Jews or non-Jews, are Israel, even giving all Believers the private and exclusive label only Israel was given by HaShem as a “kingdom of priests” and a “holy nation.”

## **Messianic Gentiles Brought into the Commonwealth of Israel**

“That at that time you were without the Messiah, being foreigners from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without Elohim in the world. But now, by Yeshua the Messiah, you who were at one time far away have been brought back [to Israel] through the [sprinkled] blood of the Messiah. For He is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us.” (Ephesians 2:12-14)

As Moshe (Moses) confirmed Israel into the covenant by the sprinkling of blood, so all who are accepted by the sprinkled blood of Messiah are also confirmed into Israel. For which is greater confirmation, the blood of bulls and goats, or the blood of Messiah? Does sacrifice even have any meaning unless one is Israel? Any nation who sacrifices besides Israel is pagan and Godless in their sacrifice. For a sacrifice to be legitimate, it requires the receiver to be in covenant with HaShem through the promises that were made to Israel only.

## Messianic Gentiles are Warned to Stay within Israel

“For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them you partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree. Boast not against the branches. But if you boast, [remember] you do not bear the root, but the root bears you.” (Romans 11:16-18)

“For if HaShem spared not the natural branches, be careful, in case He also does not spare you. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of HaShem, on those who fell, severity, but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness, otherwise you also will be cut off. And they [natural branches] also, if they do not stay in unbelief, shall be grafted in, for HaShem is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree, how much more shall these, which are the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, in case you should become wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away unrighteousness from Ya'akov. For this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.” (Romans 11:16-18)

The Olive Tree is Israel. The root is Mashiach. The grafted-in wild olive branches are Messianic Gentiles. As long as they remain in

Israel, without being arrogant of their position, they are safe and receive nourishment from the root. It is very important for Messianic Gentiles to see themselves, humbly and thankfully, as a part of Israel. Of the natural branches, the Jewish people, some, but not all, have been broken off from the nourishment of the root, and HaShem will gladly graft back again the ones broken off.

Those who say they believe in Israel's Messiah, yet do not want to be a part of Israel and continue in His goodness, are in danger of being cast off. For this reason, we are seeing the return of the Jewish people to their own Olive Tree of Israel.

## Israel and the “Jesus” of “the Church”

To be broken off from the “Olive Tree” requires the rational act of unbelief. The natural branches who have not known and have not heard of the true Messiah of Israel are not “broken off.” Most Jewish people today have not yet heard about their Jewish Messiah Yeshua in truth.

Rejection of a “Gentile Christian Jesus” who came to destroy HaShem's Torah and who rejects his own Jewishness, who is at best only a crude and extremely inaccurate caricature of the historical Yeshua HaMashiach, is NOT a rejection of the *true* Messiah of Israel.

Therefore, many Jewish people who “call on the name of ADONAI” (Joel 2:32; Romans 10:13) remain in the covenant promises, even though they may be partially blinded to the truth of Messiah.

Gentile Believers who do not realize this fact are themselves are partially blinded. Once the fullness of the Gentiles has come into Israel the blindness on all parts will be lifted, then all of Israel, Jews and non-Jews, will be saved together by the Deliverer, Yeshua HaMashiach. It is He Who has turned away unrighteousness from Israel. The truly righteous ones, both Jewish and non-Jewish, must accept their covenant place in Israel, given through Yeshua HaMashiach.

If ADONAI is *echad* (one) (Deut 6:4), and if Yeshua and Abba are *echad* (John 10:30), and if “every tongue will confess that Yeshua HaMashiach is ADONAI, to the glory of HaSham the Father” (Phil 2:11), then it follows that Yeshua HaMashiach is ADONAI. If Yeshua HaMashiach is ADONAI, then Yeshua HaMashiach appeared to Avraham at Mamre (Gen 18); Yeshua HaMashiach made the covenant with Avraham (Gen 15:17); Yeshua HaMashiach spoke to Moshe from the burning bush (Exod 3:2); Yeshua HaMashiach wrote the Torah in stone with His finger (Exod 24:12; 31:18).

And it is Yeshua HaMashiach Who today stands behind the Western Wall in Jerusalem and hears the prayers and receives the worship of His people Israel, who cannot see Him in the grossly distorted “Jesus” created by the Gentile “church.”

For thus it is written:

“Whoever calls on the name of ADONAI will be saved” (Joel 2:32; Romans 10:13)

“Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed” (Romans 10:11; Isaiah 28:16)

The “Jesus” of “the Church” is a “different Yeshua” and the “Gospel” of “the Church” is a “different Gospel” than the Yeshua HaMashiach and the Gospel that are presented in the Bible. The “Church” has much for which it must answer to HaShem.

“For if someone comes and tells you about some other Yeshua than the one I told you about, or if you receive a spirit different from the one you received or accept some so-called ‘good news’ different from the Good News you already accepted, you bear with him well enough!” (2Cor 11:4)

“I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Messiah, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Messiah. But even if I, or

an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what I have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As I have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!” (Galatians 1:6-9)

## Gerut (Conversion) for Messianic Believers

There is significant debate among various Messianic Jewish organizations over whether it is appropriate to provide a formal process for non-Jewish Messianic Believers to “convert” to “Messianic Judaism.” Rabbinical Judaism embraces a formal process — based upon the Talmud, not upon Scripture — whereby a Gentile may “convert” to Judaism. The process is described in a Wikipedia article as follows:

The Amora'im who produced the Talmud set out three requirements for a gerut to Judaism (Keritot 8b), which must be witnessed and affirmed by a beth din:

- Circumcision (*Brit milah* or *hatafat dambrit*) for men
- Immersion (*tevilah*) in a ritual bath (*mikveh*) for both men and women
- Offering a certain sacrifice (*korban*) in the Temple (the *Beit Hamikdash*) - this requirement is deferred while the Temple does not exist until such time as it may be rebuilt.

The consensus of halakhic authorities also requires a convert to understand and accept the duties of the halakha, classical Jewish religious law. This is not stated explicitly in the Talmud, but was inferred by subsequent commentators.

After confirming that all these requirements have been met, the beth din issues a “Certificate of gerut” (*Shtar Giur*), certifying that the person is now a Jew.

As a *practical* matter, the requirements may be restated like this:

The candidate for “conversion” must:

1. apply for gerut and be denied twice renounce his or her current religion, and explain the difference between the current religion and Judaism
2. affirm his or her desire to become a part of the Jewish religion (generally accomplished by “enrolling”—either formally or informally—in a course of halakhic study under a supervising rabbi)
3. adopt a Jewish name (a *shem kodesh*)
4. (for men) undergo *brit milah* (ritual circumcision) by a mohel; if already “medically” circumcised, there must be a fresh drawing of blood (*hatafat dam brit*) by a mohel (the Reform and Reconstructionist movements generally do not require a circumcision as part of the conversion process)
5. undergo *tevilah* (ritual immersion) in a *mikvah* (a pool of “living” water)
6. make a sacrifice at the Temple (since no Temple is available, the candidate may make a charitable donation as a substitute for the sacrifice)

A review of the definitions of the words “convert” and “conversion” is appropriate here.

**convert**, n. a person who has been converted to another religious or political belief

**convert**, v.

1. change religious beliefs, or adopt a religious belief;
2. cause to adopt a new or different faith

**conversion**, n.

1. a spiritual enlightenment causing a person to lead a new life;
2. the act of changing from one use or function or purpose to another;
3. a change of religion;
4. an event that results in a transformation

It should be noted that there is absolutely no formal process for “conversion” given in the Scriptures, the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) specifically ruled that no “conversion”

process is appropriate, and Rav Sha'ul specifically taught against a formal “conversion.” (It must be remembered that Rav Sha'ul used the term “circumcision” as a technical term for “Jewish” and “uncircumcision” as a technical term for “non-Jewish,” and not necessarily as a reference to the *brit milah* itself.)

Only let each person live the life the Lord has assigned him and live it in the condition he was in when God called him. This is the rule I lay down in all the congregations. Was someone already circumcised when he was called? Then he should not try to remove the marks of his circumcision. Was someone uncircumcised when he was called? He shouldn't undergo b'rit-milah.

Being circumcised means nothing, and being uncircumcised means nothing; what does mean something is keeping God's commandments. Each person should remain in the condition he was in when he was called. Were you a slave when you were called? Well, don't let it bother you; although if you can gain your freedom, take advantage of the opportunity. For a person who was a slave when he was called is the Lord's freedman; likewise, someone who was a free man when he was called is a slave of the Messiah. You were bought at a price, so do not become slaves of other human beings. Brothers, let each one remain with God in the condition in which he was called. (1Cor 7:17-24, CJB; emphasis added)

Rav Sha'ul also clearly taught that the non-Jewish individuals who have come to saving faith in Yeshua HaMashiach are *already* “fellow-citizens with God's people and members of God's family” (emphasis added).

<sup>1</sup>You used to be dead because of your sins and acts of disobedience. <sup>2</sup>You walked in the ways of the 'olam hazeh and obeyed the Ruler of the Powers of the Air, who is still at work among the

disobedient. ... <sup>11</sup>Therefore, **remember your former state: you Gentiles by birth** - called the Uncircumcised by those who, merely because of an operation on their flesh, are called the Circumcised - <sup>12</sup>at that time had no Messiah. **You were estranged from the national life of Isra'el. You were foreigners to the covenants embodying God's promise.** You were in this world without hope and without God. <sup>13</sup>But now, **you who were once far off have been brought near through the shedding of the Messiah's blood.**

<sup>14</sup>For he himself is our shalom — **he has made us both one and has broken down the m'chitzah which divided us** <sup>15</sup>by destroying in his own body the enmity occasioned by the Torah, with its commands set forth in the form of ordinances. **He did this in order to create in union with himself from the two groups a single new humanity** and thus make shalom, <sup>16</sup>and in order to reconcile to God both in a single body by being executed on a stake as a criminal and thus in himself killing that enmity. <sup>17</sup>Also, when he came, he announced as Good News shalom to you far off and shalom to those nearby, <sup>18</sup>news that **through him I both have access in one Spirit to the Father.** <sup>19</sup>So then, **you are no longer foreigners and strangers.** On the contrary, **you are fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's family.** (Ephesians 2)

Let's look at just the most relevant phrases again in isolation:

**"You used to be dead ... You walked in the ways of the 'olam hazeh ... remember your former state: you Gentiles by birth ... You were estranged from the national life of Isra'el. You were foreigners to the covenants embodying God's promise. ... you who were once far off have been brought near through the shedding of the Messiah's blood. ... he has made us both one and has broken down the m'chitzah which divided us ... He did this**

**in order to create in union with himself from the two groups a single new humanity ... both in a single body ... through him I both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ... you are no longer foreigners and strangers ... you are fellow-citizens with God's people and members of God's family."**

It is clear from the Scriptures that non-Jewish individuals who have come to faith in Israel's Messiah are "no longer foreigners and strangers" but **already are** "fellow-citizens with God's people and members of God's family" — that is, they **already are** full citizens in good standing of the Commonwealth of Israel, exactly the same as those who have been born of Jewish ancestry. It is also clear from biology that no process of "conversion" can change the DNA of a non-Jewish person and make them biologically Jewish.

What purpose, then, can a "conversion" process serve for a non-Jewish citizen of the Commonwealth of Israel other than to deny the Scriptures which clearly say that he/she is already a citizen of that commonwealth? Additionally, biblical Messianic Faith insists that in Messiah there is no difference between Jews and non-Jews. If in truth there is no difference, then what purpose does a "conversion" serve, other than to insist that there is, in fact, a difference! Apparently Rav Sha'ul was not writing under the inspiration of Ruach HaKodesh when he wrote:

For in union with the Messiah, you are all children of God through this trusting faithfulness; because as many of you as were immersed into the Messiah have clothed yourselves with the Messiah, in whom there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor freeman, neither male nor female; for in union with the Messiah Yeshua, you are all one. Also, if you belong to the Messiah, you are (present condition, not "you may become") seed of Avraham and heirs according to the promise. (Gal 3:26-30)

In order to "convert" to Judaism (even to "Messianic" Judaism), the convert must renounce his/her current "religion." So, the

non-Jewish Messianic convert must **re-nounce** his/her Messianic Faith in order to “convert” to Messianic Judaism!

The ultimate question which must be asked is **from** what is one converting, and **to** what is that one converting? How can one “convert” **from** being a citizen of Israel **to** being a citizen of Israel? To say that one wishes the conversion in order to “become Jewish” is a denial of both the facts of biology and the clear teaching of Scripture. If one is **already** Messianic in faith, can one “convert” **from** Messianic Faith **to** Messianic Faith? Any such attempt at conversion is a clear denial that the *m'chitzah* (dividing wall) has been broken down. “Conversion” of a non-Jewish Messianic Believer would then, of necessity, be a conversion from **Biblical** Judaism to **Rabbinical** Judaism, and the individual should therefore no longer be considered truly “Messianic.”

One argument in favor of providing Messianic Gerut reads:

“All other branches of Judaism provide for Gentile ‘conversion.’ Such seems to demand that Messianic Judaism must also provide for Gentile ‘conversion.’ If not, Messianic Judaism is called into question as a ‘true’ or ‘valid’ Judaism. Also, Messianic Jews normally accept Gentile conversions from other branches of Judaism. If Messianic Judaism does not have its own conversion process, then that means that Gentiles must go (and in fact are encouraged to go) to ‘non-believers’ [i.e., rabbinical, non-Messianic rabbis] as the only path to becoming a Jew. Therefore, in practice, other branches of Judaism seem to be more authentic or authoritative than Messianic Judaism. How is it that ‘non-believers’ are considered more authoritative than believers? If conversions by other branches are ‘authentic’ how is it that the Messianic Judaism branch does not perform such? Are we less ‘authentic’ than the others? This perceived impotence by some may be one reason why Messianic Judaism cannot

shake itself from being viewed by non-believing Jews as a mis-named sect of Christianity.” [CTOMC.ca]

It would appear that the main thrust of this argument is that the primary reason that Messianic Judaism should provide a “conversion” process is that all the other Jewish “denominations” do, so in order to be accepted as a “true Judaism” by the other Jewish “denominations,” the Messianic community must “get in line,” in spite of the clear teaching of Scripture. All the other Jewish “denominations” reject Yeshua as Mashiach, so perhaps the Messianic community should also reject Him in order to be accepted as “true Judaism?”

The other part of this argument is that if Messianic Judaism doesn’t provide a conversion process, non-Jewish Believers in Messiah will go to non-Messianic rabbis in order to become Jewish. Would it not be a more correct approach to teach non-Jewish Believers what the Bible teaches about them, that they are already “full citizens in good standing” of the Commonwealth of Israel?

The CTOMC argument that is cited immediately above also says:

“... presently no other branch of Judaism will accept a Messianic Jewish conversion. ... Aliyah is presently not available to Messianic Jews.”

If no other branch of Judaism accepts Messianic gerut, and aliyah is not available to Messianic Jews, what possible reasons for gerut remains? The CTOMC position provides three additional possible reasons:

1. Unification of a mixed marriage. A married couple might find it to be a unifying help for both of them to be considered Jewish.
2. Unassimilated Jewish ministry. A non-Jewish person called for ministry to the Jews may want to make sure that their work does not think to remove Jews from their Jewishness.
3. Ambiguous Jewish heritage. A person may have strong indications that they have Jewish heritage, but no "proof", so

the Gerut serves as a point of assertion and commitment to their Jewish heritage.

In answer to these points I offer the following advise: *teach them what the Scriptures say* about the condition of non-Jewish members of the Commonwealth of Israel.

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek ... (Romans 10:12)

... there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Messiah is all, and in all. (Colossians 3:11)

One of the primary defining principles of the greater Messianic Movement is that “the wall of partition” has been broken down, and that in Messiah there is no difference between Jew and non-Jew. Providing a method of “converting” from non-Jewish to Jewish demonstrates that fact that those who propose such a process *actually believe*, in spite of what they say, *that there is in fact a difference between Jew and non-Jew*, and that “the wall of partition” has *not* been broken down.

While I might *possibly* be convinced to admit that a formal “conversion” process might be appropriate for a person coming to faith in Messiah from paganism and/or idolatry (defined as any non-biblical world religion which serves “other gods”), *I must insist in the strongest possible terms that any formal “conversion” of a “Messianic non-Jewish person” to “Messianic Judaism” serves no practical purpose and is not only unbiblical, it is patently anti-biblical.* Why would Messianic Judaism be so careful to proclaim itself as “Torah observant” and then promote such an anti-Torah process as gerut?