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Shalom in Yeshua!

Messianic Judaism: here to stay!

We recently produced a new *Jewish Jewels* television program on Messianic Judaism. Since many of you still don't have the opportunity of seeing *Jewish Jewels* in your area, we wanted to share the program's content with you to clarify the vision, to educate God's people to look to the future, and to hear the heartbeat of God.

"Messianic" comes from Messiah which means "Anointed One" and is translated as "Christ" in most English Bibles. "Messianic Judaism" is Judaism **with** the Messiah, the One promised by the Jewish Prophets who would one day come to redeem God's people.

We believe that the Messiah is Yeshua (Jesus), the One who came over 2,000 years ago as a "Lamb" and is coming again as a "Lion." We call Him *Yeshua Ha Mashiach* which is Hebrew for "Jesus, the Messiah." Why Hebrew? Because He was a Jewish man in a Hebrew culture with a Hebrew name. As Jews, we can relate to His Jewishness. He is **ours**. He is not a foreigner! For too long, Yeshua has been estranged from His own people because He has been dressed in totally gentile garb, unrecognizable as a Jewish Messiah. Messianic Jews put a talit (prayer shawl) back on Yeshua and worship Him in a Jewish way.

Rabbinic Judaism vs. Messianic Judaism

Rabbinic Judaism centers around the teachings and writings of the Rabbis called the "Oral Law," with minor focus on the Torah, and even less on the Prophets. Rabbinic Judaism does not include a Messiah who has come, in fact some branches of Rabbinic Judaism are not even expecting a Messiah. The Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox are generally the traditional Jews who are looking for a coming Messiah. When He comes, they will see that He is the same One who came the first time!

When the Temple built by Solomon existed, Judaism was flexible and focused on Temple worship and the sacrificial system. After the destruction of that Temple, and the Babylonian captivity, a Judaism emerged that was very rigid, with layer upon layer of laws and requirements imposed by the Rabbis. That Judaism prevails today. The "yoke" is a heavy one. Our brothers and sisters need to hear of Yeshua's easy yoke. (Matthew 11:28-30) and the freedom and intimate relationship with God that is ours in The Son.

Messianic Judaism defined

Messianic Judaism is a congregational movement in which Jewish people hear the Good News of Yeshua the Messiah in a Jewish context and continue in their customs and traditions after finding the Messiah. Messianic Judaism is a prophetic end-time phenomenon. It is a new covenant (a b'rit hadasha) between God and His Jewish people (according to God and the Bible, but not according to the Rabbis).

Messianic Judaism is **not** a cult. There is no one worldwide leader. It is a growing "people movement." In 1967, there were approximately 2,000 Messianic Jews in the U.S. By 1990, there were more

than 100,000 and over 250 congregations. In the year 2000 there are an estimated 500,000 Messianic Jews in over 400 congregations worldwide, with more than 60 of these congregations in the Land of Israel!

Jews and non-Jews together

When Messianic Judaism began, all the believers were Jews. God had sent a Jewish Messiah to His Jewish people. The big controversy was "Can a Gentile be allowed to believe in the Jewish Messiah?"

God's answer, a resounding YES! is recorded in Acts 10:34-45. Not only can a Gentile believe in Yeshua, that believer becomes part of the people of God, a child of Abraham by faith with the circumcision of the heart. He is grafted into the olive tree of Israel, and partakes of the richness of the root. There is no need for formal conversion to "Judaism" (especially since that generally includes denial of a belief in Jesus either overtly or covertly!), because in Yeshua both Jew and Gentile are "One" in the Spirit.

When the Temple existed, there was a middle wall of partition which prohibited non-Jews from entering the Holy Place. It has been broken down in Yeshua and there are no second-class citizens in Messianic Judaism.

"For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of division between us, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father." (Ephesians 2:14-18)

What we are in the "flesh" is not the most important thing to God. The spiritual reality is the crucial one. Of the natural, God's opinion is quite clear:

"Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcised is nothing and uncircumcised is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters. Let each one remain in the condition he was in when called." (I Cor. 7:18-20)

Gentiles in Messianic Judaism are not required to become Jews. But those who are "called" choose to acculturate, to follow Jewish ways and to cleave, (like Ruth of the Bible) to the House of Israel. This is a work of the Holy Spirit and is pleasing to God.

This is not bondage, nor is it "judaizing," nor is it coming "under the law." It is returning to the root (Romans 11:17) and to the way the Lord meant His body to be from the beginning.

When did the Separation occur?

The first believers in Yeshua were Jewish people called Nazarenes (Acts 24:5). There were hundreds of thousands of them. They worshipped in the Temple in Jerusalem (Acts 2:46), kept the Jewish hour of prayer (Acts 3:1) and were all zealous for the law (Acts 21:20).

Rabbi Saul, also known as the Apostle Paul in the B'rit Hadasha, continued living, as a Jew. He went up to Jerusalem for the feasts, offered sacrifices in the Temple, and in all ways lived as an observant Jew.

The situation changed in 132 A.D. when Rabbi Akiva proclaimed Bar Chochbah to be Messiah. The Jews who knew Yeshua was the Messiah separated themselves from Akiva's proclamation and from the Jewish people who began to follow Akiva's messiah.

Further separation occurred as great numbers of non-Jews accepted Yeshua, and their influence began to dominate. Passover was replaced by Easter; Christmas was introduced. The Jewish elements of the faith were eradicated and finally, at the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.), the original Messianic Jewish movement came to an end.

Messianic Judaism resurrected

Messianic Judaism lay dormant for hundreds of years until the late 1800's when many Jewish people came to faith in Jesus. Most attended churches and identified themselves as "Hebrew Christians." It wasn't until the last half of the twentieth century that God initiated a shift from "Hebrew Christianity" to Messianic Judaism.

One of the pioneers of the modern Messianic Jewish movement, Martin Chernoff had a vision in the early 1960's of the words "Messianic Judaism" stretched across the sky like a banner. There was a beautiful light behind it and thousands of Jewish people, mainly young people, streamed in under the banner towards the beautiful light. The believers in Martin's Philadelphia home, led by the Holy Spirit drafted the following proclamation:

"We are Jewish believers in Yeshua as our Messiah. We have our own destiny in the Lord. We will no longer be assimilated in the Gentile culture of the church and pretend to be non-Jews. If Yeshua Himself, his followers, and the early Jewish believers maintained their Jewish life-styles, why was it right then, but wrong now? Gentile converts are not expected to forsake their families, cultures, holidays and traditions, nor shall we do so."

Messianic Judaism really began to flourish in the year 1967. That was the same year that Jerusalem came back under the control of the Jewish people for the first time in 2,000 years. A coincidence. No! God's time for the Jewish people had begun. The age of the Gentiles as prophesied in the New Covenant (Luke 21:24) was drawing to a close: "...Yerushalayim will be trampled down by the Goyim until the age of the Goyim has run its course..."

Since 1967 we have seen a tremendous move of the Ruach Ha Kodesh among God's chosen people all over the world. The 1970's saw the beginning of many Messianic Synagogues; the 1980's saw the establishment of Messianic Schools, Yeshivas, books, music, even TV programs!; the 1990's saw Messianic festivals and revivals worldwide, including festivals in the former Soviet Union at which an estimated 45,000 Jewish people responded to invitations to receive Yeshua as Messiah. In the year 2000 there are Messianic Synagogues in at least 25 countries around the world.

What next? More revival, a great harvest, and the return of Yeshua. Amen!

What we believe

We believe in the Physical and Spiritual restoration of the Jewish people (MUST READING: Deut. 30:1-6, Ezekiel 36:24-27, Jeremiah 31:31-34.)

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God and is inspired by the Ruach Ha Kodesh (Holy Spirit). One book. One message.

We believe that Yeshua (Jesus) is the promised Messiah, the Son of God (as prophesied), who was born in Bethlehem (as prophesied), and who died by crucifixion (as prophesied). We believe that Yeshua rose from the dead (as prophesied), made atonement for our sin, and is coming again to judge the world.

We believe in One Messiah and two comings. The New Covenant (B'rit Hadasha) sealed in Yeshua's blood, makes it possible for all who receive Yeshua to come directly into the presence of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, both here and forever in eternity.

How Messianic Jews live

Messianic Jews embrace Jewish culture and life-style, as long as it doesn't contradict the Bible. We worship on the Biblical Sabbath, Friday evening to Saturday evening. We participate in Davidic praise and worship, including the dance. We support our synagogues through tithes and offerings rather than "dues." Our children become Bar and Bat Mitzvot. We marry under a huppah.

Most of us are "Biblically Kosher" (no shellfish, pork, etc. but we don't separate meat and dairy). We celebrate the Feasts of the Lord (Lev. 23) as well as Hanukkah and Purim. We have onegs, kiddush, and candlelighting in our homes and synagogues. We bless our children following the ancient Birkat Cohanim (Priestly Blessing), say kaddish for departed loved ones and chant Kol Nidre on Erev Yom Kippur.

We celebrate the resurrection during Passover not Easter. We study Torah. We are ardent Zionists. And we call ourselves Messianic Jews, not Christians, because to our traditional Jewish brothers and sisters "Christian" means a non-Jew at least, and a hater of Jews at worst. We are still Jews...completed, fulfilled, Messianic Jews. We are the Jewish part of the Body of Messiah, twice chosen, twice blessed, and very grateful to God.

Life from the Dead!

In speaking to Gentile believers in Rome about his own Jewish people, Rav Shaul (the Apostle Paul) said the following:

"For if their casting Yeshua aside means reconciliation for the world, what will their accepting Him mean? It will be life from the dead!" (Rom. 11:15)

Everytime a Jewish person receives Yeshua we see life from the dead since the Bible tells us that we were dead in trespasses and sins and have been quickened, made alive, in Messiah. (Ephesians 2:1) The physical and spiritual "resurrection" prophesied in Ezekiel chapter 37 is a total picture for His chosen people from the beginning of time. The day is also coming when the Jewish people as a nation will come to faith in Yeshua. Then we will experience a literal, bodily resurrection _ life from the dead.

For Summer Reading, Viewing, and Listening

We would like to encourage you to purchase a copy of the new *Jewish Jewels* program on "Messianic Judaism." Then invite your Jewish neighbor, business associate or family member over for some cool summer refreshments and a thought provoking video presentation.

We think you will also enjoy reading and giving our newest outreach booklet: [Messianic Judaism: Life from the Dead](#). It is a succinct presentation of the information in this newsletter along with the scriptures that are behind the modern Messianic Jewish movement.

Good news for all you **Jonathan Settel fans**. His newest album, "I Believe," is now available on CD and audio cassette. The opening song, "Lord of the World," was written by Phil Klein. It's one of Neil's favorite Messianic songs. You will really enjoy Jonathan's rendition.