



If you have ever invited your good friends over for a Friday evening candle-lit dinner, blessed the name of the Lord with a cup of wine, and thanked Him for daily bread, and then were kicked out of church on Sunday morning and rejected by your good friends... you might be Messianic.

Many Messianic brethren have experienced the joy of coming to the Messiah *and* the Torah only to face blanket rejection by family and friends. Many new Messianics are bewildered by those who urged them to seek the Lord and then turned completely against them when they have done exactly that!

I have spoken with parents who have been cut off by children, pastors who have been cut off from their own congregations, and friends who have lost friends. They all ask me the same question: “How can I share my faith with them? How can I get them to understand? Do you have some materials prepared that I could share with them?” They ask for an approach, a way to reach out to those they care for, and find vindication for themselves for their conscious decision to believe and do what the Scriptures actually say.

In recalling my own experience of rejection, I am reminded of the day that I led an adult Sunday school class. I did not initiate the topic; it was the prescribed lesson in the Baptist Quarterly for that Sunday. It was a lesson on the Ten Commandments (the Law).

I first asked the class if they agreed with the following statement: “Should we obey the Lord?” I went around the room one by one asking for their responses. All agreed in the affirmative. I then asked the class: “Are the Ten Commandments the commandments of the Lord that we are to keep?” I also proceeded to read each commandment one at a time and ask for their responses.

You could see it coming. The fourth commandment, *remember to keep the Sabbath holy*, loomed before them. Before I could even get to it, one of the men in the class questioned me as to my purpose for asking the questions. He went on to accuse me of being underhanded with the class. “I understand what you are

doing,” he complained. I responded by asking him what he thought I was doing. He said I was attempting to trick the class by getting them first to say that we should obey the Lord and then read the Ten Commandments one at a time asking whether it is the commandment of the Lord. He knew that the church and class did not keep the Sabbath as commanded. He backed up his claim by asserting that he had a B.S. degree from a Bible college. I responded to him with “I think theology is too important to B.S. about.” The lesson ended there. I was given the left foot of fellowship from the church.

Rejection is not something anyone enjoys. As new Messianics face rejection they are truly perplexed and stunned to discover how family members and spiritual brethren can behave in such a manner. Our Master also faced rejection from His own brethren. When we follow in His footsteps we should not be shocked or dismayed to receive the same treatment He experienced.

If you are going to share your Messianic faith, you should know up front that the conflict is not really with you. The conflict resides with others and whether they will submit to the Lord. If you project the testimony of willfully obeying the Lord, then you should expect others to reflect upon you their issues with the Lord. Another way to describe it is that God refers to the believers as *sheep of the flock*. One of the strongest characteristics of sheep is their need to conform to one another. Sheep feel safe when they have other sheep with them.

Many Christians today want you to stay “with the flock” out of the natural need to conform. Those who appear to be different or apart are often rejected at first. The average Messianic sharing his testimony definitely does not appear to be conforming to the typical church flock; therefore, there is hesitancy and concern when Messianics first share with them. The rejection you feel is not directed at you personally. It comes with walking with the Lord and at the same time drawing others to the Lord by your example. Let me explain.

It is generally rare, but occasionally you will discover a genuine truth seeker, someone who has taken a step back and asked how he can learn more. Often, the Holy Spirit has already prepared his heart to receive the Torah he is truly seeking. He asks questions not asked in his previous experience. When you discover him, you don’t need to lay out an entire thesis nor do you need to be skilled in Messianic apologetics. Sharing your life and inviting him to hear the same teaching you are hearing and enjoy the same fellowship you are enjoying is all that necessary.

Let me answer the real 'how to share your Messianic faith' question up front and then we will address some specific issues and tips. Think back to your own awakening and interest in being Messianic. What was happening in your heart? There were probably two things happening at the same time to some degree.

1. You were disappointed, discouraged, or dissatisfied with how your faith was going. The church or fellowship you were in was not getting the job done despite

your contributions and service. You probably said something like, “I am not getting fed there.”

2. Something attracted your soul to the ancient Biblical stories about the Hebrew people and the Hebrew God. You suddenly saw that God was glorious and that the Messiah was that God.

So, a brief answer to how to share our Messianic faith with others is to share your experience with them and invite them to learn the same things you are learning. Following are some comments on stumbling blocks or misunderstandings about what Scripture says that I hope will be helpful to you.

If the New Testament seems *old* to you and the Old Testament seems *new* to you... you might be Messianic.

I have discovered that many of the Messianic brethren whom I have invited in were simply waiting for the confirmation of another believer to present themselves to them. The Holy Spirit had been drawing them to this walk for some time. They were experiencing a true hunger for truth and righteousness, the same hunger that the Messiah said He would satisfy.

Not everyone jumps on board immediately. I have seen other brethren come to the Messianic walk after resolving some fundamental issues. They took their faith seriously and studied to know what they believed. However, some of what they learned about covenants was and is in disagreement with our Messianic faith. They deserve to have their questions answered and treated in an honest way. Messianics don't say, “Well this is what we believe,” and dismiss the question. Messianics want to know the evidence (all of it) and they want to establish the truth by the witness of two or three. Asking questions and discovering the truth is the Hebrew way of learning.

Having the proper understanding to answer straightforward questions is important in sharing our faith with others. Understanding the differences that exist in observance between Christians and Messianics and being able to accurately present what is commandment and what is custom is necessary to be honest about the faith. Understanding what the Scriptures really do say and differentiating what religious men have done with them is essential to resolving long-standing issues. Let me say right now that not everyone is up to this task, which is okay. God has raised up many teachers and ministries who can address these issues. In the last ten years, more materials have been produced to support Messianic thinking than at any time since the Messiah had His own discussions with religious leaders.

Make no mistake about it. The Church fathers departed from the words of the Messiah just as quickly as the Pharisees and Sadducees departed from Moses. Messianics are seeking to know what Moses and the Messiah had to say for themselves devoid of religious doctrine and dogma.

In this article I want to address the major arguments that Messianics face as they transition. These are the arguments that your family and friends will throw at you. They also are the very issues that a truth seeker will find as compelling vindication for deciding to become Messianic. Finally, I want to end with some simple but very practical ways to encourage your family and friends to be part of your Messianic fellowship.

I have grouped the arguments and issues into three broad categories: Replacement Theology (New Covenant vs. Old Covenant), The Law is done away with (the Law is bad), and Religion of the Heart (Grace vs. the Law).

Replacement Theology

(New Covenant vs. Old Covenant)

Replacement theology is the primary teaching of the orthodox Christian faith, which basically states that God got fed up with Israel's disobedience and kicked them out the land. As a result, God changed His plan to reach the world through Israel and replaced them with the Gentiles (the church) by the work of Jesus Christ. Instead of Israel, He started the Church.

Supporting this idea, Christians say that the New Covenant (New Testament) has replaced the Old Covenant (Old Testament), relegating the Old Covenant to history and declaring that the true instruction in righteousness is found in the pages of the New Testament. They cite the example of Jesus and the Apostles, particularly the Apostle Paul.

When Christian teachers are pinned down to prove this from the pages of the Bible, they explain how Jesus changed things. They argue that Christians get saved by believing in Jesus and the "Jews" got saved by keeping the Law. They say that the Church has replaced the temple in Jerusalem. They say that Jesus changed the Sabbath to Sunday. They say that only the "moral law" from the Torah is relevant today and the ceremonial law is not to be observed any longer. In the case of Passover (a ceremonial law) Jesus held the first Communion at the Passover table. The list goes on.

Simply said, they say that God had plan A with Israel, but now He is on plan B with the Church. Dispensationalists say that one day God will go back and finish plan A after the church is raptured to heaven.

The problem with this theology is that Scripture doesn't say this at all. It is the teaching of churchmen to justify their existence and set themselves apart from Israel (and the Jews).

It is usually stunning for Christians to learn that Moses predicted that Israel would eventually disobey to the point that God would scatter Israel to the nations, and that Moses said that God would not reject them when this happens, nor would the covenant made with them be broken. Instead, God would remember the covenant with them and eventually bring them back.

Yet if in spite of this, you do not obey Me, but act with hostility against Me, then I will act with wrathful hostility against you; and I, even I, will punish you seven times for your sins. Further, you shall eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters you shall eat. I then will destroy your high places, and cut down your incense altars, and heap your remains on the remains of your idols; for My soul shall abhor you. I will lay waste your cities as well, and will make your sanctuaries desolate; and I will not smell your soothing aromas. And I will make the land desolate so that your enemies who settle in it shall be appalled over it. You, however, I will scatter among the nations and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become waste.

Leviticus 26:27-33

Here is Moses warning Israel that there is a finite limit that the LORD will tolerate of Israel's disobedience. The result would be Israel's removal from the Promised Land and they would be scattered in the nations. Historically, we saw the House of Israel go to Assyrian captivity and the House of Judah go to Roman captivity.

What did God say would happen to the Promised Land without the people of Israel living in it?

Then the land will enjoy its sabbaths all the days of the desolation, while you are in your enemies' land; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it will observe the rest which it did not observe on your sabbaths, while you were living on it. As for those of you who may be left, I will also bring weakness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies. And the sound of a driven leaf will chase them and even when no one is pursuing, they will flee as though from the sword, and they will fall. They will therefore stumble over each other as if running from the sword, although no one is pursuing; and you will have no strength to stand up before your enemies. But you will perish among the nations, and your enemies' land will consume you. So those of you who may be left will rot away because of their iniquity in the lands of your enemies; and also because of the iniquities of their forefathers they will rot away with them.

Leviticus 26:34-39

Doesn't this sound like Israel is done for— that God has rejected Israel and they are no more? You could draw this conclusion if you stopped reading and had something else that you wanted to set up in place of Israel. However, Moses did not stop at this point in discussing this matter. He continued.

If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me- I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies- or if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity, then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land. For the land shall be abandoned by them, and shall make up for its sabbaths while it is made desolate without them. They, meanwhile, shall be making amends for their iniquity, because they rejected My ordinances and their soul abhorred My statutes. Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God. But I will remember for them the covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am the LORD.

I was never shown these last verses when I was in the church. No one ever explained that God was so faithful to His covenant with Israel that He would remember and keep it forever. I was told that God changed His mind about Israel and chose the Church. The truth is that God is faithful to His promises and He **KEEPS** His covenants.

By the way, we should also address the misrepresentation of the covenants that God keeps for us. The church teaches they are lumped together and called the *Old Covenant*. This is not anywhere near Biblical truth. The truth is that God has made several covenants before the “New Covenant.” For example, God made a covenant with Adam. He made another one with Noah. The covenant with Noah did not replace the one made with Adam. Then He made a covenant with Abraham. This covenant was extended to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This covenant did not replace the previous covenants made with Adam or Noah. Each of these covenants was still recognized for what they were. Then God made a covenant through Moses with the descendants of the fathers (the children of Israel). This covenant did not replace the one made with the fathers nor with Noah, nor with Adam. They all complemented each other but each had its promises and signs. Then God made another covenant with King David and his son Solomon. The city of Jerusalem was established and the permanent altar (the temple service) was set. Again, this covenant did not replace the previous covenants. So, where did we get this idea that all of the previous covenants are lumped together and called the *Old Covenant*? You probably know this answer, but my question is more to why are they grouped together and referred to as *Old*.

The book of Hebrews in the New Testament is the source of all these definitions grouping the previous covenants of God together as the *Old Covenant* and establishing the *New Covenant* given to us by the Messiah. The book of Hebrews is a theological argument promoting the Messiah as above all previous religious authorities in Israel. The writer argues that the Messiah is higher than the Levites and the priesthood. There is no argument there, but then the writer attempts to explain the *New Covenant* and twists the prophecy of Jeremiah to suit his theological purpose.

Just as Moses prophesied that Israel would be scattered to the nations but not forgotten by God, so Jeremiah spoke of when God would “renew” the covenant God made with our fathers in the wilderness. This time God would write His commandments upon the tablets of our hearts instead of tablets of stone.

Does this mean that all of the previous covenants of God would be relegated to history because of this wonderful NEW covenant? According to the book of Hebrews – yes. According to the rest of Scripture – no.

The book of Hebrews should never have been put into the Canon of Scripture. It is the very basis for replacement theology today. It is not the product of a first

century Apostle. It is a product of a Greek churchman who wanted Hebrew believers to join him and leave Israel and the things of Israel.

Take a breath. The average church-going Christian cannot handle a serious discussion about the errors of the book of Hebrews. They have been trained to hold the Bible in utmost regard. Some believe in the Bible more than they believe in God. We are not going to be able to solve that problem; that is the work of God's Spirit.

What am I suggesting here? By showing that God made clear and unequivocal promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which extended to their descendants (the children of Israel), we prove the power of God to keep His word. Believing the promises of God is the faith that is counted for righteousness. By declaring and showing that God does not change His mind, that He is faithful to them and to us, we prove that the covenants of God are alive and with us today. This is faith that can hear God speaking from Mount Sinai giving His commandments. This is the same faith to see the Messiah giving those same commandments from Mount Sinai and explaining them to us in the pages of the Gospels.

God promised that He would provide a Lamb of God for our sins and that He would send a Prophet that would explain these things to us. The Lamb was promised by Abraham, and Moses said the Messiah would come from the mountain (the very presence of God) to teach us. Since this is the plan given by the *Old Covenant*, how does that mean that Messiah would replace the very thing that it said He would do? If this seems confusing to you, it should. It is absurd to suggest or teach that the Messiah came to teach something different from Moses or to do away with the teaching of Moses.

In fact, the Messiah and New Testament pages address these very issues. The Messiah said that His teaching is exactly what Moses taught.

For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

John 5:46-47

Yeshua equated the writings of Moses directly with Himself. He went even further, questioning how anyone could believe (understand) His words and teaching if they did not first believe what Moses wrote to begin with.

Today, replacement theology churchmen advocate that you only need to start with the book of John to understand the Christian faith. But according to the book of John and the words of the Messiah, you need to start with the words of Moses to understand the words of the Messiah.

Today, replacement theology churchmen advocate that Jesus came expressly to do away with Moses, the temple service, and the customs of Moses. There is a passage in the New Testament that makes this statement.

*And they put forward **false** witnesses who said, "This man incessantly speaks against this holy place, and the Law; for we have heard him say that this Nazarene, Jesus, will destroy this place and alter the customs which Moses handed down to us."*

Acts 6:13-14

There it is. There is the statement of replacement theology. However, this statement is also referred to as **false** testimony used to wrongfully convict Stephen. Saul of Tarsus (later to become the Apostle Paul) was in this crowd assisting in the death of Stephen.

According to Acts 6:13-14, any man who teaches that Jesus came for the purpose of doing away with Israel, the covenants of God, the temple service and altar service, or change the customs of Moses including Sabbath and Festival is a FALSE WITNESS.

Thank Goodness that God has given us a covenant with the Messiah that places His commandments in our hearts so we might obey Him from the heart!

The Law is done away with or the Law is bad

This argument is a further extension of replacement theology with the purpose of discrediting the very Word of God given by God at Mount Sinai and through the Torah given by Moses. Since the first four covenants are expressed in the pages of the Torah, dismissing the Torah would then dismiss those covenants. This may be the real rationale for calling all of them the *Old Covenant*. They want the Law (the Torah) to go away.

Just for the sake of argument, if the Torah does go away, what laws are we to follow as believers in the Messiah? The church has readily offered their answer; it says it is "church law." Instead of following the commandments of God they prefer the precepts of men. This is the same mistake made by the Pharisees and Sadducees in Yeshua's day. By the way, the Pharisees don't keep the Law of Moses either; they prefer the teachings of the Rabbis.

Yeshua the Messiah spoke directly to the issue of His coming and its impact on the Torah (the Law).

Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:17-20

Yeshua was emphatic about *not even thinking* that He came to abolish the Law. His emphasis was direct and specific. He equated the existence of heaven and earth to the viability of the Law. As long as heaven and earth are with us, so will the Torah be with us. He could not have said it clearer.

The phrase used by churchmen to negate the entire sentence and thought of the Messiah is *but to fulfill*. They argue that Jesus fulfilled the Law and thus made it go away (become abolished).

The word *fulfill* used in this verse does not mean “bring to completion and get rid of” as suggested by churchmen. It means to “fill up full,” which means to make it even more meaningful. One of the greatest Messianic prophecies which has been grossly ignored by the Christian Church is the one given by the prophets Isaiah and Micah.

Now it will come about that in the last days, the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways, and that we may walk in His paths.” For the law will go forth from Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war.

Isaiah 2:2-4, Micah 4:1-3

According to this prophecy, the whole world will eventually stream to Jerusalem to hear the Messiah teach the Law (the Torah). The Messiah is to become the greatest teacher of the Torah. Since we are to emulate the Messiah and follow in His ways, why isn't the Torah being taught by every Bible teacher of the Messiah?

Further, the Messiah talked about other teachers, warning that anyone who annuls any of the commandments, even the least of them, will be least in the coming Kingdom. He then reversed the logic and spoke of those who will follow in His ways and teach what He teaches, they will be great in the Kingdom.

Not winning the argument that the Messiah came to do away with the Law, some like to argue against the Law by quoting the Apostle Paul. Before we go further, let us ask a quick question. If the Messiah emphatically supports the Torah, then why would churchmen try to pit the Apostle Paul against the Messiah in this argument? I can assure you that the Apostle Paul is not above the Messiah and he would never agree to churchmen quoting him to undo the Torah. For the sake of discussion let's address some the specific passages that are quoted from Paul.

One of their favorites is from Romans where Paul expresses that we are not *under the Law*.

For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace.

Under the law is a jurisdictional term. I live in Oklahoma. I am not under Texas law, but if I travel to Texas I will then be under Texas law, because I am in that jurisdiction. The same is true of certain laws of God. The context of Paul's argument in Romans 6 is about being under the power and influence of sin. If you are a sinner, then you are under the law concerning sin and death. If, however, you have been redeemed, then you are no longer under the law or subject to its judgment. This is what Paul is teaching. He is not teaching that God's law is no longer effective or appropriate. Using this verse to justify not keeping God's commandments is probably the most blatant example of taking an expression out of context to teach something misleading to many.

Those who argue against the Law of Moses are those who are ignorant of what the Law actually teaches. Take the case of those who argue that Jesus was the final sacrifice. Sacrifices are part of the Law, so if sacrifices are no longer to be done, then the Law is no longer to be done. The problem is that Yeshua was NOT the final sacrifice. He is the Lamb of God sacrifice. The Law only specifies sacrifices brought by men as gifts to the LORD. They are for unintentional sins and sins by mistake. The Law says that a sin that is willful and defiant against God merits Death. The wages of sin is death. There is no sacrifice that a man can bring for those sins. However, God can bring a sacrifice that is the work of the Messiah. Does that make sacrifices go away? Absolutely not. God's definition of an acceptable substitute is still valid and binding to this day. In fact, every new believer accepting Yeshua's sacrifice enforces and relies on God's definition of acceptable sacrifices as defined by the Law of Moses. Yeshua did not make the Law of Sacrifices go away.

The book of Galatians is probably the favorite text of those opposed to the Law. It seems that the Apostle Paul is perturbed that the Galatian believers have decided to start keeping the Pharasaic Law (precursor to Rabbinic tradition today). Before we go further, let's get the context of the book right.

Paul was trained as a Pharisee before he met the Messiah. After he came to know Him, Paul was in a constant battle with his former Pharisaic brethren. Acts 15 records a major dispute with the Pharisees and the Apostles. Part of Paul's defense of Gentile believers was to keep them from being made subject to the Pharisaic leaders. The Pharisees are famous for making new rules for others to follow. The Galatian believers fell prey to the Pharisees and Paul was trying to get them to return to the Messiah. To accomplish this, Paul argued that the Law does not save; the Messiah saves. The Law does not give the gift of the Holy Spirit; the Messiah gives the gift of the Holy Spirit, etc.

For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them." Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "The righteous man shall live by faith." However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "He who practices them shall live by them."

Galatians 3:10-12

The Law is a curse. The Law is a blessing. In fact, twelve specific curses are listed in Deuteronomy 27. God instructed Israel to pronounce blessings and curses on themselves to understand and keep the Law. But they didn't do it for salvation. They did it to choose the blessing! The Law also teaches that faith believes the promises of God. Righteousness is doing the right thing. You are accounted (given credit) for doing the right thing when you believe (have faith) in the promises of God. That is what Torah teaches and that is what Yeshua taught, but the Pharisees teach something different. They teach that righteousness comes from keeping commandments. The more commandments you keep, the more righteous you are. This is not what Moses or the Messiah taught. Paul then explains the proper place for the Law in our Messianic faith.

Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.

Galatians 3:21

Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.

Romans 3:31

The Law of God (the Torah) is the teaching of and the instructions in righteousness. They are commandments on how we shall regard the Lord and honor Him. They are instructions and limits to our behavior on how we behave with one another.

As it turns out, there are different instructions based on your station of life. If you are a man, then there are specific commandments for you. If you are a husband or a father, then keep these commandments. If you are a priest, keep commandments pertaining to priests. If you are the High Priest, then keep these specific commandments. If you are woman, keep these, etc. What it boils down to is this: for everyone, no matter who you are, there are ten specific commandments that all must keep. You can then summarize those ten down to two. "You shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart, your soul, and your might." The second one is to "love your neighbor as yourself." These are the foundation of the whole law. This is the teaching of Yeshua.

The Law has not been done away with; it has been established by faith in the Messiah and brought to even greater meaning. There is no instance in the New Testament Scriptures ever saying that the Law is done away with or even diminished in any way.

In fact, the opposite is said.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

When this verse was written there was no New Testament. The only Scriptures Paul was referring to were Moses (the Torah) and the Prophets.

Religion of the Heart

(Grace vs. the Law)

This last category of arguments comes from those who try to pit the Holy Spirit (and being led by the Spirit) against the Law. Instead of learning to walk before the Lord in Spirit and in truth, they believe that they can ignore the truth and just follow the Spirit. Sadly, those are the same folks who get led astray by deceiving spirits, because they cannot discern the truth. I refer to this kind of argument as Greasy Grace and Sloppy Agape. They flaunt grace to the harm of God's own word. I can assure you right now – that is not right. Paul said it this way.

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!

Romans 6:15

Just because you are saved and not subject to the penalty of sin does not grant you the freedom to freely sin! May I remind everyone that we are not to test the Lord. Our ancestors did that in the wilderness and, although they were saved, they did not make it to the Promised Land.

Some brethren believe that because of God's grace they are free to participate in any religious expression (as long as they think their heart is right), eat any unclean thing (because Messiah makes it clean), and behave any way they like (because God will forgive them).

In the Acts 15 account of resolving what was expected of the new Gentile believers to the faith, the Pharisees argued that they can't even be saved unless they keep the Torah according to their definition. That argument was summarily dismissed when it became clear that everyone is saved by faith, not by the works of the Law. But then the question of what they are to do with the Law remained. Is the Law just for Israel (just for the Jews some might think) or is it for any and all people who come the Lord (the whole House of Israel and the Commonwealth of Israel). The answer is the latter.

Moses taught that the Torah was given to all people, whoever believes in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

As for the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the alien who sojourns with you, a perpetual statute throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the alien be before the Lord. There is to be one law and one ordinance for you and for the alien who sojourns with you.

Numbers 15:15-16

Clearly there is no distinction with regard to the commandments of the Lord. By the way, the Hebrew word for “assembly” translated to Greek is “ecclesia.” Yet, the same word translated from Greek to English is “church.”

The New Covenant has placed these very commandments (that all are to keep) upon the hearts of every believer. Whenever I hear a well-meaning Christian say that the Lord has not yet put it upon his heart to keep the Torah, I cringe. He has just testified to the fact that He does not know the Messiah and has not yet received the New Covenant. The Apostle John addressed the same issue this way:

The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

I John 2:4

At the conclusion of the Acts 15 conference, the Apostle James drafted a letter to all the Gentile believers and dispatched it by two witnesses. It stated that the Gentile believers should abstain from idolatry, from unclean food items that have blood or have been strangled, and to abstain from fornication (all forms of sexual perversion). Most Christians understand the last category without hesitation. So why do they dispute the first two?

They dispute the kosher requirement for foods because they have not been taught. The New Testament clearly and specifically teaches that there is one law for all of us when it comes to the definition of what is clean and unclean and what is food and what is not food.

I was once challenged on the food definition of kosher for all. “Are you saying that if I eat a BLT (bacon, lettuce, and tomato) sandwich that I will not go to heaven?” Since keeping the Law or not keeping it has nothing to do with salvation, I responded, “If you eat that BLT, you will go to heaven faster!”

Idolatry is the real issue for us as Messianics today. Some consider idolatry to be a sin left behind in Biblical times, but it is rampant in our midst today by church folks in willful ignorance.

The observance of Christmas stands head and shoulders with Israel making the golden calf while Moses was on the mountain receiving the two tablets. Every reasonable Bible scholar knows that the birth of the Messiah was in the fall around the Feast of Trumpets and Tabernacles time frame. The December 25 date was the mixing of the birth of Mithra with Constantine’s convenient Christianity. The cutting down of an evergreen tree, attaching boards to the bottom, decorating it with gold and silver is the ancient Asherim (trees of praise) idolatry specifically forbidden by Jeremiah (see Jeremiah 10:2-4). The Santa Claus figure is right from King Neptune (Roman) and Poseidon (Greek) gods of the sea. Apparently, he also shares gifts with children in need. The Dutch brought him to us in America.

So what do Christians do? They claim this is the story of the birth of the Messiah and believe that because their hearts are near and dear to the Lord with love of family and seasonal blessing that grace covers any minor indiscretion.

I had to address this issue between a Messianic believer and his family several years ago. The Messianic wanted to skip the tree part and just have family fellowship; however, the rest of family who attended church regularly insisted on the tree and the trimmings. I had the opportunity to address the matter directly with the family. I told them that I believed that they sincerely were not participating in an idolatrous act, that they only wished to love the Lord and enjoy His blessings. They agreed and stated that their hearts were pure in this regard. I said that they were correct except for that one little part. They asked, "What little part?" I said, "You know... that part where you get on your knees in front of the tree, you bow, and then you take the blessings from under the tree. That is the part where there is no doubt that you are an idolater bowing before another god."

One of the commandments of the Lord says, "You are not to follow your eyes which go a whoring after idols." We are instructed to listen and hear what the Lord has said. We are not to do it "the way we see it." The religion of the heart allows every person to decide for themselves whether they will obey specific things the Lord has said. That is a false religion. The Lord has specifically said we are not to do any such thing. We are to hear His words and obey. Faith comes by hearing, not by when you see it that way.

You shall not do at all what we are doing here today, every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes;

Deuteronomy 12:8

Be careful to listen to all these words which I command you, in order that it may be well with you and your sons after you forever, for you will be doing what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 12:28

These are just a few of the common stumbling points that I hope will give you a clearer definition of what is the Messianic understanding. As you can see, there is no cultic activity at all within this movement, just a fuller understanding of Torah and the commandments Yeshua referred to.

How do we share our Messianic Faith?

Live it before them. Set the proper example by your good works, by your love, and your friendship. Should you point out their mistakes? No. God is Judge of us all.

Demonstrate and testify to how God has been gracious and merciful with you and they too have received from Him freely.

Invite them to your home for a Sabbath dinner. Invite them to your Torah study. Invite them to the Feasts. Build on their testimony of the Messiah and show them that instructions in righteousness enrich their faith in the Messiah.

... and tell them they need to hurry a little bit. The Messiah is getting ready to return soon to establish His kingdom. The Torah will be the rules of that kingdom and we will be going to Jerusalem to see Him in His temple.

Share the Faith!



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