KOL HESED

#1/2026 „Voice of Grace“- Jewish Messianic Newspaper

Politic

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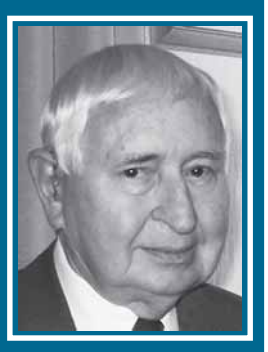

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Two Legitimate Identities In Yeshua

Igor Swiderski

Here is a topic that should cause both Christians and Messianic Jews to sit up and take notice. When we understand this aspect of God’s revelation, the Bible will open up more for us, the Great Commission will become clearer, and even Paul’s writings will make more sense. My hope is this topic will be as important to every follower of Yeshua as it is to me. This topic contains truths that we must not only know, but also live out and pass on to others. In this article I will talk about truths that we may never have heard of before.

Shaul - Paul

Acts 21 is a key passage. We have all probably read it several times, but its impact may have escaped us. This passage of scripture is truly extraordinary and should not be underestimated. In a way, it is a key to understanding the Bible as a whole and, in particular, to understanding Pauls’ writings.

People often have a problem with Paul’s statements for precisely this reason: they have tried to understand Paul without understanding the context of Acts 21. On the other hand, if you say “Amen and Hallelujah” after every word he says, it is probably for the same reason—Paul is being read without this context. Truly understanding Acts 21 changes one’s perspective!

But first, a little preparation. Let’s go back in time to the year 57 AD, which is about 25 years after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Yeshua. Yeshua, the Messiah of Israel and the Savior of the world, sits at the right hand of the Father and will come again to change our world and finally bring the true peace we all are waiting for. The year 57 AD is also about 25 years since Paul found faith in the Messiah. Paul is just returning from his third missionary journey through the Roman Empire where he preached the message of the one God, the God of Israel, and His Messiah, Yeshua. Through his ministry, many have come to faith. Now Paul is on his way to Jerusalem—for the very last time. For in Jerusalem, he will be arrested and later taken as a prisoner to Rome. He has eight years left to live, after which he will die for his faith in Messiah Yeshua. What’s more, on his way to Jerusalem, he was even warned about this (Acts 21:10-11). A prophet came and declared that Paul will be taken prisoner in Jerusalem. The disciples around him said: “Paul, for heaven’s sake! Take this warning seriously, and please don’t go.” That’s logical! What would you have said? If I were Paul, I would certainly have said, “Thank you, Lord, for protecting me!” But Paul behaved differently. Ready to sacrifice his life for the Lord, Paul continued his journey and reached Jerusalem (Acts 21:12-14). But before the prophecy of his arrest comes true, Paul meets with other giants of faith, including James and the elders of the first Jewish-Messianic congregation in Jerusalem.

Jewish Giants of Faith

James and Paul are both Jews. Both wrote letters that became books of the New Testament. Both will die as martyrs, giving their lives for their faith in the Messiah. In Acts 21 they meet in Jerusalem for the very last time on this side of eternity. What do they talk about? The Bible tells us that these two Jewish men talk about their two ministries. James and the elders in Jerusalem are responsible for the ministry to the Jews. Shaul (Paul) is responsible for the ministry to the Gentiles.

When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers and sisters received us warmly. The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present. Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: ‘You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law. (Acts 21:17-20)

The Bible tells us how greatly the Lord used Paul during his travels. How long do you think it took Paul to finish telling all the wonderful accounts of the many miracles God had done? Incidentally, all these Roman provinces and colonies were religious and polytheistic. They all went to different temples, believed in different gods, and lived according to the low moral standards of the day. Only the Jewish people believed in the one God who called Himself

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Mazel Tov! Congratulations!

You are reading a Jewish Messianic newspaper! It is the sister publication of a German-language Messianic newspaper read not only in Germany, but also in France, Italy, Switzerland, Holland, Scotland, and Israel. Its focus is a topic that affects every Jew: Jesus and the Jews. This topic typically causes one of two opposite reactions. Either it irritates to such an extent that knowledge of classical literature and love of art cease to have any meaning, or it turns a skeptic into a devotee. In this newspaper we refer to Jesus as Yeshua, His name in Hebrew.

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The Israeli Settlers

Krista Gerloff

What is said about them and what we know

In the media, whether worldwide or in Israel, we only hear about them when there are riots and violence against Palestinians or Israeli soldiers. If this comes from settlers, they are extremists who make up a tiny part of the total population of so-called Israeli settlers. Otherwise, among the almost 800,000 Israelis who live today in the Golan Heights, in Judea and Samaria, and in East Jerusalem, we find all kinds of people whom we otherwise encounter in Israeli society.

Many residents of Israel's capital, Jerusalem, have no idea that they are "settlers" and "illegal occupiers" in the eyes of the European Union and many international institutions. They live in neighborhoods and areas that were occupied by Jordan after Israel's War of Independence in 1948 and conquered by Israel in 1967. In July 1980, the Knesset, the Israeli parliament, declared the entire city of Jerusalem to be the eternal and indivisible capital of the State of Israel in the so-called "Jerusalem Law."

Jerusalem is Israel's largest city, developing rapidly and with a steadily growing Arab and Jewish population. From the Israeli perspective, Jerusalem is not legally a "settlement." However, as the European Union sticks to its position and people, as is often the case, move from one part of the city to another, some become settlers, while others cease to be settlers when they move. This also applies to other parts of the country. People move to so-called settlements, which today have tens of thousands of inhabitants, such as Maale Adumim or Modiin Ilit, and then back to recognized Israel in Beer Sheva or Tel Aviv. The number of Israelis who would not live in a "settlement" for ideological reasons is decreasing for various reasons.

The term "settlement" can be confusing. It covers a whole spectrum of cities, villages and towns, including small farms in the Judean Desert or the hill country of Samaria.

In addition to the settlers from Jerusalem, there are also residents of the Golan Heights, which were occupied by Israel during the Six-Day War and declared Israeli territory by law in 1981. Shortly after the end of the war, experienced kibbutzniks founded the first kibbutz, "Marom Golan." Soon more were added. Today, when you visit Susita, one of the archaeological national parks, you can not only walk along a Roman road but also watch a film that tells how, during the War of Independence, kibbutzniks from Ein Gev even captured a Syrian military base from which they were constantly shelled.

The settlement of the Golan Heights after the Six-Day War was primarily for security reasons. During the Yom Kippur War in 1973, the residents were forced to flee. But they returned after the war and rebuilt the destroyed places. Today, the Golan Heights are a place of fertile plantations, vineyards and pastureland. At an altitude of over 1000 meters above sea level, raspberries and blueberries, which do not otherwise grow in Israel, also thrive.

The Druze at the foot of Mount Hermon grow delicious apples and make salads from wild herbs. Archaeological excavations testify to an interesting history and nature reserves attract countless visitors. A unique feature in Gamla is the conservation station for endangered vultures.

From the shores of the Sea of Galilee, one can see a hilltop in front of the Golan Heights where, after the First World War and the fall of the Ottoman Empire, representatives of Great Britain and France stood to divide the area between themselves. At that time, the Golan Heights were then assigned to France. With the end of the French mandate, Syria became independent in 1946. The British had the mandate to enable the Jews to establish a national homeland on their territory both west and east of the Jordan. But by the early 1920s, about 75% of the British Mandate of Palestine had been separated and declared the Emirate of Abdullah Ibn Hussein. Abdullah actually came from the Arabian Peninsula. His father had been the Sherif of Mecca. The League of Nations approved this first partition of Palestine on September 16, 1922. As a result, the East Bank of the British Mandate of Palestine became the Emirate of Transjordan.

After the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993, the government of Yitzhak Rabin considered returning the Golan Heights to Syria. At that time, banners, posters, and stickers reading "The People with the Golan" appeared everywhere. Today, no one in Israel regrets that a "peace agreement" with Syria under these conditions was not reached. From the perspective of the EU and a large part of the UN, the Israeli inhabitants of the Golan Heights are still occupiers of Syrian territory. Under President Donald Trump, the United States recognized Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights in 2019.

There were settlers "who were residents of the Jewish villages in the Gaza Strip." Exactly 20 years ago, the Israeli government under Ariel Sharon implemented a decision to unilaterally separate from the Palestinians. All residents of the Jewish communities in the Gaza Strip were forcibly relocated, "uprooted," as they themselves called it. This was done with the approval of the whole world, even though according to the Fourth Geneva Convention it is no longer legal to "deport or transfer" civilians for political reasons.

When in the year 2023, in connection with the controversies and massive demonstrations surrounding the judicial reform, there was talk of "the greatest crisis since the founding of the State of Israel," the thought of the unfortunate separation from the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip through the expulsion of its own population was unavoidable. In my view, the heartbreaking scenes of Israeli soldiers forcibly dragging their own civilians from their homes was the greatest crisis in Israeli society, with terrible consequences.

The Palestinians could have built a Singapore on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean. But they built Hamastan – and the world continued to talk about occupation, even though not a single Jew, not a single Israeli soldier, remained in the Gaza Strip. The flourishing agriculture with its huge greenhouses on sand, synagogues, schools and kindergartens, all residential buildings were destroyed by the Palestinians – "the world of yesterday," as Stefan Zweig would say, ceased to exist.

Twenty years after that tragic attempt to secede from the Palestinians in Gaza and grant them self-rule; after three decades of rocket fire and terrorist attacks on Israeli territory, culminating on October 7, 2023, in the worst massacre of Jews since the Holocaust, retired Major General Gershon HaCohen, who led the expulsion of Jews from the Gaza Strip, admits that without the evacuation of the settlements, the massacre would not have happened. The smuggling of weapons from Iran and the establishment of a terrorist stronghold in the Gaza Strip would not have been possible in this way. We will likely hear from these settlers and their descendants again — albeit initially in connection with the ill-fated 20th anniversary.

So far, we have been dealing with settlers who, from the Israeli perspective, are not settlers. Then there are settlers who are no longer settlers because the government evacuated them from the villages in the Gaza Strip against their will. Then there are the settlers, about whom there is a lot of talk at the moment, who live in places that are historically very important for the Jewish people.

I write "at the moment" because on July 23, 2025, the Knesset, by a majority of 71 votes, issued an official recommendation to the Israeli government to declare sovereignty over Judea, Samaria, and the Jordan Valley. This resolution describes these territories as an inseparable part of the historical, cultural and spiritual homeland of the Jewish people.

For example, there are settlers from Hebron. It was there that the patriarch Abraham bought a field to bury his wife, Sarah. The patriarchs Isaac and Jacob are also buried there together with their wives Rebekah and Leah. King David ruled in this city before making Jerusalem Israels capital. For 3,000 years, there was a continuous Jewish community in Hebron until Arabs committed a horrific massacre in the summer of 1929. The British Mandate evacuated the surviving Jews, so that the old Hebron community was wiped out.

When assessing a situation from a historical perspective, the question always arises as to how far back in history one should go. To biblical times? To the Byzantine period? To the Middle Ages? Into the early modern period? Regarding the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria, there is archaeological and written evidence of a Jewish presence, often of a Jewish majority population. The beautiful mosaic from an ancient synagogue in the Gaza Strip can now be admired, for example, in the Museum of the Good Samaritan on the way to the Dead Sea.

In Europe, Gentiles always wanted to determine where Jews could live and where they could not. That is why Jewish life in Europe is characterized by expulsions, restrictions, ghettos and worse. Even today, when the Jewish people have returned to their original homeland, we Europeans obviously want to continue to determine where Jews may and may not live, even in their own country.

The Palestinians and their supporters have made their voices heard around the world, not only in Arabic but also in a universally understandable chant: "From the river to the sea, Palestine shall be free!" They openly demand that the entire historical territory of Israel from the Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea should be "judenrein."

When the slogan "From the river to the sea" became so popular, I was personally immediately struck by an irony of fate, or perhaps the irony of God. This sentence comes from the Bible. There God promises his people (Deuteronomy 11:24): "Every place that your foot sets on will be yours: from the desert to Lebanon, from the Euphrates River to the Mediterranean Sea, all of it will be your territory." However, there is also a condition attached to this in the relationship between the God of Israel and his people.

An interview with Neriyah Arabov, leader of the Jewish Messianic congregation „Beit Yeshua“, Bat Yam, Israel

Neriyah, you are a lecturer at a Bible school, a certified Israeli tour guide, and leader of a Messianic congregation. But first and foremost, you are a Bukharian Jew. Let's start there.

The Bukharian Jews originate from Central Asia. They came to this region around the time of Saladin in the 13th century CE. There are only about a million of us in the world. I come from the city of Samarkand. Like all Bukharian Jews, I went to synagogue, celebrated all the holidays, and had my bar mitzvah at the age of 13.

Is there a difference between Bukharian and Ashkenazi synagogues?

The Bukharian Jews are a branch of the Sephardic Jews, and accordingly there are slight differences in Jewish religious tradition.

As a religious Jew, you are probably very familiar with Jewish tradition...

No, I'm not, and I don't even have the right to claim that, because I'm not a rabbi. Only a rabbi has the right to interpret the Tanakh and reflect on traditions. Rabbinical Judaism has found its "own way" to serve God. If you don't belong to this movement, you have no right to think about God. You have to be able to understand the Talmud, which means you need a good education. I just went to synagogue like all other Jews. But as a student at a Soviet school, I was influenced by atheistic propaganda and didn't believe in the existence of God. I believed that we Jews would survive as a nation by observing our traditions.

Did you experience anti-Semitism?

Yes, of course; it was everywhere. The Jews in Bukhara experienced it just like all other Jews. At home we spoke Farsi, but Russian was my main language. Central Asia was part of Soviet culture, which also included anti-Semitism.

Let's talk about your family. You are a father of many children. How many children do you have?

We have seven children. Five of them are biological and two are adopted. Our adopted daughters are now grown up and live in Canada. They come from Eritrea. We took them in when they were sick and emaciated, the oldest was four and the youngest was two.

Today, these African girls speak fluent Russian and Hebrew. They had no chance of obtaining Israeli citizenship because Israel does not grant citizenship to non-Jews. We found a program for them in Canada and they will soon obtain citizenship there.

I named my first son Baruch. There is a biblical figure, a scribe who served with the prophet Jeremiah, named Baruch ben Neriyah. When I lived in Central Asia, I didn't like my strange name, Neriyah. But when I came to Israel, I realized what a wonderful name my parents had given me: "Light of Yahweh."

When my wife was pregnant, I believed it would be Baruch. And so it was. Then we had a daughter, whom we named Sarah. Today she is studying at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. Then we had Cindy. In 2005, I suffered kidney failure, was on dialysis, and was waiting for a donor kidney. One day, a woman from Michigan, USA, came to Israel and donated her kidney to me. Exactly one year after that, our next daughter was born, whom we named after my donor. Then we had Jacob, and finally David was born. A few months after Jacob's birth, we took in two girls from Eritrea. They were living in a refugee center and the conditions were terrible. My wife Anna went there as a volunteer. One day she arrived and saw a terrible sight: a little girl, Suzy, who was not yet two years old, was lying on the side of the road where buses were passing by. Women were sitting nearby, showing no reaction whatsoever. Anna took the little girl and her sister home with her. The children looked very ill: they had swollen stomachs and heads and very thin arms and legs. Anna decided to take them with her and bring them back later. But as luck would have it, they stayed with us for the next ten years, until they emigrated to Canada. We communicate with each other almost every day.

So how did a religious Jew who did not believe in God come to believe in Yeshua?

When the first Jews followed Yeshua 2000 years ago, a question arose over time: How can non-Jews follow this Jewish teacher? 2000 years later, the exact opposite question arose: How can Jews believe in this Jew who died a shameful death on the cross, was buried, and rose from the dead on the third day? For many, his resurrection is a turning point: Do you believe that he rose from the dead? Because if you believe, you have a personal relationship with the Creator, but if you reject it, you cannot have a relationship with God. Yeshua said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). For us Jews, these words are direct proof that Yeshua is the promised Messiah and the sacrifice pleasing to God. For 2,000 years there has been no temple, and in its place God allowed two mosques to be built. In other words, we as Jews must recognize that there will never be a temple, that there will never be sacrifices, and that there can never be a high priest, because Yeshua is our sacrifice, He is the high priest, and He is the way to the living God.

How did this turning point in your life come about when you decided to follow Yeshua?

This happened in a supernatural way. It was in 1994. At that time, I was thinking a lot about the Messiahship of Yeshua. I was impressed by a sermon by a Georgian Jew. It was about the theme from Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 7. It was about King Ahaz, who, after hearing the prophet say to him, "Ask a sign of the LORD," decided to pretend to be religious and replied that he did not want to tempt God. That was his mistake. Because when Hashem offers you to ask Him for a sign, you should do it! After all, He wants to strengthen your faith. That day I came home and asked the LORD for a sign. And He gave it to me! At first, I thought it was a coincidence. But the LORD showed it to me again. Then I asked God for forgiveness for my unbelief, and my first request was that my family, if they found out about my new faith, would not abandon me. To this day, I have a good relationship with all my relatives. My maternal uncle has two older sons who are chief cantors in the Bukharian synagogue—very respected people in their religious community. At the same time, his youngest son is openly gay. And whereas I used to argue with my religious relatives, we are now good friends. Because compared to their younger brother, I look very religious!

But you also look religious: you wear a kippah, a white loose shirt...

Yes, that's my normal clothing, I've always dressed like that. God didn't come to change our culture, but to change our hearts. It's very important to remain in the culture to which God has called you.

Before I believed in Yeshua, I wore a kippah. After I became a believer, I took it off. But after receiving biblical training, I realized that God wants everyone to remain in the culture to which they were called, so I put the kippah back on. The kippah itself is unimportant, but what is important is that our lives testify that we are God's children.

As a result of your conversion and your changed life, a wonderful family was formed and eventually the Messianic congregation "Beit Yeshua" in Bat Yam. Please tell us about your congregation...

The kidney that was transplanted to me in 2005 failed in 2011. I died with that kidney. Miraculously, I was revived. At that time, I weighed only 45 kg. While I was recovering from this illness, I thought I was on my way to the afterlife. One day, the leaders of the Messianic congregations in Israel (about 100 people) went to the desert to pray. I remember it was five o'clock in the morning. Everyone went to their own place to pray alone. The Negev desert consists of hills, so there was a place for everyone. I also found my corner, began to pray, and read Psalm 16. I can still recite it by heart in Hebrew. This psalm says: "I will praise the LORD who gives me counsel; my heart also instructs me in the night" (Psalm 16:7). And fur-

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An interview with Neriyah Arabov, leader of the Jewish Messianic congregation „Beit Yeshua“, Bat Yam, Israel

continue

ther: “For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, nor will you allow your holy one to see corruption” (Psalm 16:10). Suddenly I heard a voice, a clear voice: “What do you want?” and a strong gust of wind blew over my back. At five in the morning, there is absolute silence in the desert. Even the flies are asleep. But there was a gust of wind and a voice... I replied, “I want to be healed.” I heard the voice again: “Go!” I walked on and came to a hill. The voice said, “Go up the hill.” The hill was muddy and slippery. Summoning all my strength, I climbed up the hill with great difficulty. Again the voice said, “Jump!” I was standing about two meters high. I jumped and didn’t even fall. Then the voice said again, “Don’t murmur. Go and start a Messianic assembly in the place where you live.” The thing is, we used to go to a church in Tel Aviv. I told the story to my wife and a few other friends. Everyone supported me, and in January 2012, we gathered for the first time in Bat Yam. We have been there for twelve years now. The meeting is constantly growing. We work with new immigrants and, more recently, with Ukrainian war refugees. First and foremost, we provide humanitarian aid: food and clothing. We teach Hebrew, for which special classes have been set up. Originally, we had two goals: to proclaim the Good News and to build a Messianic congregation. From this, the following idea crystallized: the main thing is to preach the Good News. As a result of this proclamation, the Messianic congregation was formed.

In which religious direction is your community developing? On your community’s YouTube channel, I see that you wear a tallit...

The most important thing is to be a witness of faith in Yeshua. Everything else is not so important. A professor at our Bible school claims that the New Testament had a much stronger influence on Judaism than the lives of non-Jewish believers. For example, the Passover Seder, which is celebrated by all religious Jews, probably became part of Jewish tradition because of Messianic Jews. Similarly, the passages quoted in the books of the New Testament disappeared from the weekly reading of the Haftarah (prophets). Just as chapter 11 of 1 Corinthians tells men not to cover their heads during prayer and prophecy, Judaism prescribes the opposite—namely, to cover the head, in clear contrast to what is written in the New Testament.

There is a beautiful explanation that says that since the Torah states that the people of Israel are a nation of priests and priests must cover their heads, then the entire people of Israel must cover their heads in our time because there are no longer priests or temples...

There is no confirmation of this in the Talmud. There is only a rabbinical fairy tale from the 6th or 7th century, according to which a certain rabbi lived to be 200 years old because his mother covered his head from birth.

Yes, if it worked that way... Tell me, how many Messianic believers are there in Israel today?

Not enough! Tom Hess, a well-known preacher who lives in Israel, keeps statistics. But that is completely unbiblical. The Bible teaches that we should not count people, but money. Every Jew who came to the temple had to give “Mahatzit Hashekel” - half a shekel. If a Jew did not pay the money, he was excluded from the community of Israel. This is how the Jewish population was counted in biblical times. Nevertheless, Tom counted about 25,000 Messianic Jews in Israel. Dr. Zuref said that there are about one million Messianic Jews in the world.

These numbers are impressive! And now to another topic: What is the mood in Israeli society after the Hamas attack on October 7?

Our nation is in mourning. Added to this is the division of the people. The anarchists, who are supported by the security forces, are causing real chaos, blocking Israel’s main traffic artery, the Tel Aviv highway, and burning bonfires, etc. The majority of Israelis hope for the existing legitimate government. The most important opposition group are the religious Zionists who serve in the army and are currently making a great sacrifice with their soldiers who have been killed. However, they are regarded as extremists by the government. But it is these extremists who are driving the cause forward. The Israeli government’s concept has so far been to maintain friendly relations with the Arab population of Israel. It was assumed that only a small portion of the Arab population considered themselves enemies of Israel. Now, however, it turns out that the majority of Arabs approve of Hamas’ actions. They themselves, about 90%, are in favor of Israel ceasing to exist. And even now, after the destruction and deaths and the destruction of homes and infrastructure, most of the residents of Gaza want to continue this war. They are willing to sacrifice themselves to the end in order to kill as many Jews as possible. Rockets continue to fly from the Gaza Strip into Israel because the people living there are obsessed with the idea of destroying as many Jews as possible. They know there is no way to destroy Israel, but at least they want to kill as many Jews as possible. We, the believers in Yeshua, know who is behind all this. The enemy of the human race continues to carry out his plans because he knows what is coming. In the same way, he is using the Arab population for his own purposes.

What are your personal predictions? What does the future hold for Israel?

I confess that I do not follow the news so as not to be overwhelmed by my own emotions. Our eyes should be fixed on God, not on His enemy. Anything that distracts us from Him does not belong to Him. We try to bring joy to people and preach hope. Hope is found only in God. God’s Word warns us that one day the whole world will go to war against the Jewish people. As the prophet Zechariah says: “... I will make Jerusalem a burden for all the nations; all who touch it will be torn, and all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it” (Zechariah 12:3). But here too we find hope: “And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and of repentance, and they will look on me, whom they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only son, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son” (Zechariah 12:10). Yeshua will surely save us. But the people who remain alive will weep when they see the pierced hands and feet of our Lord. Why will they weep when redemption has suddenly come? Because they will be ashamed that we were fixated on traditions, holidays, and keeping the commandments and overlooked the most important thing: we did not see the living Messiah. Although it is written: Kol berekh tikhrah veh kol lashon todeh (English: Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess) that Yeshua is the Messiah. That is why we have hope. At the moment, a war is taking place. We do not know how it will end. But the whole world is crying out for the creation of another Arab state at the expense of Israel, the only Jewish state. There will be no Jews in this state, even though there are two million Arabs living in Israel who enjoy full civil rights and have their own representation in parliament. There was even a Muslim Arab in the last government. And that is further proof that this world is still not ruled by God.

I completely agree. Anti-Semitism is clear proof of this...

The European Union ambassador to Israel said that the EU has completely different standards for Israel than for the Palestinian Arabs. One should not behave like them. And Angelina Glick, a well-known correspondent in Israel, parried this by saying: Of course you see the Arabs as some kind of thing or as animals. Why don’t you treat us the same? After all, you Europeans have always looked down on Arabs and Jews – that is your historical position. Why don’t you put us on the same level now? And now you want to establish a state that is free of Jews? Why should you do that? Why can Jews live in London and New York, but not in Judea and Samaria?

That’s our crazy world. To conclude our interview: What would you wish for Israel?

I believe in the salvation of Israel because it is written in God’s Word. And we look forward with hope. Looking back is notoriously tricky. Lot’s wife did that and was turned into a pillar of salt. So look ahead, for there lies our bright future. Yeshua Ha Mashiach will be king in Israel, and the whole world will have the peace it has longed for. That is why the psalmist says: Shaalu shalom Yerushalayim (English: Wish for the peace of Jerusalem). For true peace is when the King of Peace sits on his throne in Jerusalem and rules over Israel and the whole world. We are waiting for His kingdom and pray, “Thy kingdom come!”

Yes, that is the uniqueness of our world. Absolutely everything depends on a small strip on the geographical map of the world, where not even the name of the country fits. When Yeshua sits in Jerusalem, his peace will spread throughout the world. Conversely, when chaos reigns in Israel, the whole world will sink into chaos. And yet the word of the Most High remains true for all time.

I am amazed that my ancestors read this Torah thousands of years ago and that we still read it today. And the Torah tells us that a prophet like Moses will come and that we must listen to him. Moshe was king of Israel, high priest, and prophet all at once. There has never been a person in Israel who combined all these offices. And only the Messiah Yeshua combined these functions. That is why the Torah says that one must listen to Him. That is why I pray that the people of Israel will listen to Him, the true Messiah of Israel.

Thank you very much!

The Eternal Hatred: Anti-Semitism Past and Present

By Andrej Beritski

The shadows of the past reach into the present

After the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD, no one could have imagined that hatred toward the Jewish people would survive for more than two millennia. Now, with unlimited access to knowledge and global networking, we are horrified to discover that anti-Semitism in our supposedly 'enlightened societies' is not only alive and well, but is experiencing a disturbing resurgence.

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it", said philosopher George Santayana, which seems prophetic in light of the resurgence of hatred toward Jews today. But the bitter truth is that humanity does not learn from history. Instead, we see continuous patterns of anti-Semitism throughout history with a persistence that is shocking.

The history of anti-Semitism – a brief chronology

Anti-Semitism is as old as the diaspora itself. The suffering of the Jewish people continued after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD and the dispersion of the Jewish people.

In early Christian times, the outrageous accusation of "deicide" took hold with devastating consequences that lasted for centuries. Jews were collectively blamed for the death of Jesus, a deceptive tragedy that was only officially corrected in the 20th century by the Roman Catholic Church.

Anti-Semitism sunk to a new low in the Middle Ages with the spread of ritual murder legends. In numerous European cities, Jews were accused of kidnapping Christian children to use their blood for Passover matzah. In 1171, all the Jews in Blois, France were burned at the stake because of the ritual murder rumor. These blood libels continued: in 1235 in Fulda, Germany, in 1247 in Valréas, France, in 1255 in Lincoln, England, and so on. The list is shockingly long.

Jewish historian Simon Dubnow has documented that Jews were accused of poisoning wells during the Black Plague of the 14th century. In 1349 in Strasbourg, France, approximately 2,000 Jews were burned on a huge pyre. A contemporary chronicler noted: "Many Jews were burned in Basel... At the same time, Jews were burned in all the cities along the Rhine."

The modern era saw no progress. On the contrary, anti-Semitism was justified on the basis of "science". In the late 19th century, Wilhelm Marr coined the term "anti-Semitism" and founded the "Anti-Semitic League." Hatred of Jews was now excused based on race. This development culminated in the Holocaust, the systematic murder of six million Jewish people.

The "new" anti-Semitism – old patterns in modern disguise

In 1970, Russian writer Vasily Grossman published "Life and Fate" in which he wrote: "Anti-Semitism is like a mirror in which the mistakes of individuals and communities are reflected in a distorted form." He recognized even then what is obvious today: people come and go, but anti-Semitism persists.

In 1882 Leo Pinsker, one of the early Zionists, compared anti-Semitism to demonology in "Auto-Emancipation": „Hostility toward Jews is a psychosis. As a psychosis, it is hereditary, and as a disease that has been passed down for two thousand years, it is incurable." Pinsker believed that a Jewish state would cure this psychosis – a hope that has only been partially realized.

Today, anti-Semitism is changing, yet its essence remains the same. In 2023, the following shocking graffiti was found at a memorial to Holocaust victims in Paris: "I hated Jews before it was cool." Anti-Semitism has become a disturbing fad in today's world.

The spread of anti-Semitism in digital media

The internet has become a fertile ground for anti-Semitism. Social media acts as a catalyst and amplifier for anti-Semitic narratives. According to a 2024 study by the Anti-Defamation League, anti-Semitic content on Twitter/X has increased by more than 700% since October 2023.

The manipulation of images and information on the internet is particularly disturbing. Fake images, AI-generated content, and photos taken out of context are used to demonize Israel and Jews. Platforms such as "Stock Conflict Photos" offer dramatic images for a fee that purportedly document the conflict in Gaza, but often come from completely different contexts.

Digital disinformation has reached unprecedented levels. Media scholar Dr. Jonathan Albright of Columbia University documented more than 1,200 cases in 2023 of images from Syria, Iraq, or even computer games that were presented as "evidence" of Israeli atrocities.

Anti-Semitism at universities

Universities, once bastions of enlightenment and rational thinking, are now often centers of anti-Semitic agitation. Historian Dr. Deborah Lipstadt, US Special Envoy for Combating Anti-Semitism, described the situation at American universities as an "alarming erosion of the basic safety of Jewish students."

At Columbia University in April 2024, Jewish students were prevented from entering the campus. At Harvard University, Jewish students were verbally abused and threatened. At German universities, Israeli guest speakers were shouted down and Jewish events were disrupted.

Philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy commented on this development: "What we are seeing today at universities is the intellectual legitimization of an age-old hatred under the guise of 'criticism' and 'anti-colonialism.' It is the academic masquerade of anti-Semitism."

The reversal of perpetrator and victim

The current anti-Semitic rhetoric resembles that of the Middle Ages. The accusation that Israel is a "child murderer" sound disturbingly similar to the medieval ritual murder legends. In the past, alleged eyewitness accounts were circulated. Today, images of child 'victims' are shown, manipulated or cut and pasted from other conflicts.

Shortly before his death, Jewish scholar Rabbi Jonathan Sacks wrote: "The new anti-Semitism works like the old: it projects onto the Jews exactly what the anti-Semites themselves do or advocate."

For example, Yuval Raphael, a survivor of the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023, represented Israel in the 2025 Eurovision Song Contest. She faced massive hostility and threats. In another example, Eden Golan, the Israeli contestant in the 2024 Eurovision Song Contest, also faced fierce protests and hostility for representing Israel. At the same time, rapper Kanye West (Ye) recorded songs with anti-Semitic lyrics containing "Sieg Heil" and "Hitler" that soared in the charts. The prophet Isaiah warned about this distortion when he said: "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who turn darkness into light and light into darkness" (Isaiah 5:20).

The Nazi – Middle East connection

The historical connection between National Socialism and anti-Semitism in the Middle East is largely forgotten or ignored. The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Mohammed Amin al-Husseini, met with Adolf Hitler in 1941 and actively supported the "Final Solution." German Nazi propaganda was systematically disseminated throughout the Arab world.

In fact, Hitler's "Mein Kampf" is still a bestseller in many Arab countries today. In a shocking survey conducted in 2022, 87% of respondents in Gaza and 72% in the West Bank said they had a "very positive" or "somewhat positive" opinion of Adolf Hitler.

Former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir recognized this situation with frightening clarity: "Peace will come when the Arabs love their children more than they hate us." This statement may sound harsh, but it describes a fundamental problem: a systemic hatred that surpasses natural affections.

Whole societies affected

Anti-Semitism infects societies around the world today. In Germany, more than 5,000 anti-Semitic incidents were documented in 2023 – an increase of 240% over the previous year. In France, the number of anti-Semitic attacks has increased tenfold since October 2023.

In some neighborhoods of European cities, Jews who wear kippahs risk being attacked. The term "Jew" has once again become a slur

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He was a Jew who was expelled from Germany

By Horst Alexander

It seems like it was only yesterday, but my story begins almost 60 years ago in early December 1946. At that time, I was a World War 2 German prisoner of war, confined in a small camp along with about 120 former soldiers of the German Wehrmacht. Clatterbridge was the name of the camp, near Bebington, Wirral, England. Christmas was just around the corner, and somehow, even among the hardened soldiers, there was a kind of bustle, sometimes with a funny sense of secrecy. Everyone in the camp seemed to be thinking about something they hoped would be a pleasant Christmas surprise for someone. That was not an easy task, considering our circumstances. Of course, our thoughts were increasingly with our loved ones at home, whom we hadn't seen for years.

Life in a prison camp is quite dreary, making the Sunday trips to the small town of Bebington a pleasant change. Little by little, we became familiar with the streets of the town. The community hall we had to pass on our way into town was located on the main road leading into the town. The name â•œBethesdaâ•• was clearly visible in large letters on the wall of this building. At the time, this name meant nothing to me. I also liked going to the Port Sunlight Museum, which I believe belonged to Lord Leverhume. One day, while strolling through the museum looking at the antique furniture and other items, suddenly I saw two employees open double doors, and Lord Leverhume himself entered the room. To me, he was the perfect image of an aristocrat, even though I had never seen one. At that moment, I was the only visitor in the room, and I simply didn't know how to behave. I watched the employees closely and saw them bow repeatedly as they answered his questions about the furnishings of the room. In my confusion I simply imitated the employees and bowed a few times myself. At that time as a young man of 19, wearing my prisoner of war uniform, I must have looked rather strange to Lord Leverhume. As for me, I felt out of place in his museum. When I left the museum, I saw his car at the main entranceâ•”a green Rolls Royce. It was the first Rolls Royce had ever seen in my life. Despite these interesting and sometimes enjoyable trips, a feeling of oppression came over me. At that time, almost every day one could read terrifying reports about the conditions in German concentration camps. When we walked through the streets of Bebington in our prisoner of war uniforms, we were of course recognizable to everyone as former German soldiers. However, as far as I can remember, we were never harassed.

As a German prisoner of war in England, I had several encounters with Jewish people, all of whom I would describe as â•œgifted by Godâ•• and therefore consider to be among the most enjoyable and important contacts in my life. First, however, I would like to tell you about the invitation that the Bethesda congregation in Bebington sent to the German prisoners of war in the Clatterbridge camp. At Christmas time, we were cordially invited to coffee and cake in the Bethesda congregation hall on Friday December 27, 1946, at 5:00 p.m. The invitation was from Mr. Benigson, a member of the congregation, although none of us knew the congregation or Mr. Benigson. In order to plan for the refreshments, those prisoners of war who wanted to attend were asked to report to our camp clerk. In our dreary prison life, this invitation was not only a big surprise, but it also sparked some discussions among us. For quite a few in the camp, the invitation appeared to be an attempt to influence us religiously. Nevertheless, eleven prisoners signed up, including me. On the date of the event, we entered the community hall at the last minute. To our great surprise, all of the seats were occupied. In fact, nearly 80 prisoners showed up, which was about two-thirds of all of the prisoners of war in the camp. The eleven prisoners who had registered in advance were astonished. We were further surprised by the reaction of the church members to the unexpectedly large number of guests. They quickly set up additional tables, benches, cups and plates, and in no time, everyone was seated. In general, we noticed that these Christians radiated such joy and openness. They all seemed to have this joyful nature, and their attitude toward us was unexpected. They asked us to sing German Christmas carols. Plenty of coffee (not tea) and cake were served. Our hosts gave short speeches in which they repeatedly pointed us to the love of God through His Son Jesus Christ. Like most of us, I had heard this message before. But the way it was presented, the personal commitment, the warmth and love of these people who, just an hour earlier, had been complete strangers, left the majority of us in awe. Recall that we were a group of more or less hardened soldiers, forced to live behind barbed wire for years. Now suddenly we found ourselves as guests, sitting at tables set for us in an English community hall. The very friendly people who were serving us had been our enemies in a terrible war only two years earlier. We wondered where they got the strength to treat us this way. Now here's another fact that shook each and every one of us: Mr. Benigson was Jewish, an engineer by profession who had owned an electrical equipment company in Hamburg before the war. In 1938, he and his wife were expelled from Germany because he was Jewish. Some of his relatives had been murdered in German concentration camps. In 1946, some family members were still listed as missing. Furthermore, I witnessed this surprising incident myself: Mr. Benigson embraced one of us very warmly. It turned out that a young prisoner of war had been born in Hamburg, and Mr. Benigson recognized him as a fellow countryman from Hamburg by his dialect. Again, I wondered: Where did he find the strength to welcome this stranger, who belonged to a people that had brought indescribable suffering upon the Jews? On the way back to the camp, a lively discussion arose about our experience. I still remember the event vividly today. I was drenched in sweat and trembled all over for almost the entire forty-five minute walk back to the camp. I think I was so agitated that I was unable to participate in the conversation. I couldn't sleep that night. At that moment in my life, I was not aware that I had somehow been confronted with the love of the Son of God. I was fascinated by the attitude of these people and tried to find out what enabled them to overcome natural human reactions. From then on, I not only attended the Sunday morning meetings at Bethesda Hall, but I also went to the Bible and prayer meetings during the week. I quickly realized that Bethesda in Bebington was a gathering place where the â•œOpen Brethrenâ•• met regularly. At that time, I did not know what â•œbrethrenâ•• were. However, I quickly realized that all the members of this community had a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and that they knew they had been forgiven of their sins. For me, it was like a miracle that these Christians had something so attractive.

On the other hand, my pride would not allow me to submit to such ideas as forgiveness, grace, or mercy. During the previous years, I had been exploring the ideas of some German philosophers. In Germany, the National Socialist ideology had been defeated, and with it all my ideals. I told myself that this should never happen again, and so I became an avid reader of philosophical books. Before I visited Mr. Benigson, I prepared myself by studying the theories of Schopenhauer and Kant. However, this was only to defend myself against the simple and unambiguous biblical statements of the Gospel. Mr. Benigson, however, spoke to me in all simplicity about the grace and love of Jesus Christ. For quite some time, I tried to hide behind philosophical logic, the laws of nature, and metaphysicsâ•”as far as I understood them. But on that day, January 13, 1947, in the small kitchen of Mr. and Mrs. Benigson, I was finally able to cast aside my pride and arrogance and entrust myself to the One who created heaven and earth, who in His inexplicable love went to the cross of Calvary, where He also died for my sins. When I got up from my knees, Mr. and Mrs. Benigson embraced me, and thanks to the grace of my Lord and Savior, I was allowed to call myself a child of God. That was the day of my rebirth. So, a born-again Messianic Jew led me, a Gentile, to the Lord Jesus. For me, this was undoubtedly the day of the Lord's grace, and all that remains for me to do is to praise Him for His love and grace. In fact, from that moment on, I knew why I became a prisoner of war in England, something I never considered when I became a soldier at the age of 17.

YEAR OF REDEMPTION

Bernd Niemeier

„... to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God..."

(Isaiah 61:2)

The number 50 can be thought of as the 5th zero or the 5th decade. Whether it's a birthday, a golden wedding anniversary or some other memorable event, the "special moment" arrives and marks a turning point. Perhaps the event is dramatic like "the crossing of the Rubicon". Or perhaps the event denotes an achievement like half a century has been lived.

However the 5th zero comes, it often causes us to pause and evaluate our lives. Time is passing: How to spend the time we have left? We hope to make the most of our remaining opportunities. It may be our last chance to tackle something "new." According to rabbinical tradition: "Life begins when the last child has left home and taken the dog with them!"

Fifty years is a long time in the life of an individual. But from a global historical perspective, fifty years is like the blink of an eye.

The land of 'Eretz Yisrael' was, is, and will always be the property of the ETERNAL, who has assigned it to the 'B'nei Yisrael', the children of Israel. In the Land of Israel, the 50th year was called the Year of Jubilee. The Year of Jubilee, the "Year of Grace of the ETERNAL", is the name given to the year that follows 49 years, or 7 X 7 years. In the 50th year, everything is reset to "the beginning", enabling a new start. Generational justice is demonstrated by the remission of debts and promissory notes – according to divine order.

It is interesting to consider these amazing 50-year gaps in the modern "life of Israel":

In 1867, the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, Abdülaziz (1830-1876), lifted the ban on Jews acquiring land in the Holy Land. This led to the first major wave of Jewish repatriation, or 'aliya', back to their land which at that time was called Palestine.

In 1917, General Edmund Allenby led the British Empire's Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF) and captured Jerusalem without a fight, making the whole of "Palestine" part of the British Mandate.

After that event, the British government issued the Balfour Declaration (1917) expressing support for the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. The Allied Powers added their support in the San Remo Agreements (1920).

In 1967, during the Six Day War, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) conquered East Jerusalem. Young soldiers stood before the Western Wall, the most significant of all Jewish historical sites. Before that war, East Jerusalem had been occupied illegally by (Trans-)Jordan from which they launched rocket attacks against Israel's civilian population. Now Jews once again have access to Jerusalem, including the Western Wall. The Holy City has returned to Jewish administrative control after 2,000 years!

In 2017, the then (and current) President of the United States, Donald Trump, recognized Jerusalem as the capital of the sovereign State of Israel.

The following two events are also separated by 50 years:

On October 6, 1973, an alliance of several Arab states attacked Israel on its holiest holiday, Yom Kippur, in a vain attempt to "drive the Jews into the sea". The Yom Kippur War is also called the fourth Arab-Israeli War because it was their fourth attempt to "wipe Israel off the map".

On October 7, 2023, almost exactly 50 years later, Hamas invaded southern Israel and brutally massacred innocent Israeli citizens. Although it was crime against all humanity, some deceived people considered it to be part of the "struggle for freedom" of the (artificially created in 1964) "Palestinian people".

Nevertheless, we can say as we have said so many times through the years of Jewish world history: "AM ISRAEL CHAI" which means, "The people of Israel live!".

We live today, and we will live tomorrow! The ETERNAL ONE Himself has promised it. He has sworn by His HOLY NAME! And YESHUA, the MESSIAH of Israel, is "... the same yesterday and today and forever!" (Hebrews 13:8) AMEN! AMEN! AMEN!

Let us look at a promise that is thousands of years old: The messianic YEAR OF REDEMPTION!

It is recorded in the 61st chapter of the prophet Isaiah:

"The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour ...." (Isaiah 61:1-2a)

Today, curiously, this passage is nowhere to be found in the prophetic readings (which are assigned to the individual parashot, the weekly sections of the Torah reading).

While He was in the synagogue in Nazareth in the First Century of our era, YESHUA was spontaneously assigned the "reading service with interpretation". The custom of the day was to ask guests or travelers to perform this task. At that time, the text that YESHUA read was probably still part of the reading order (Haftarot). YESHUA's interpretation of the text was brief.

YESHUA identified himself as the Messiah with His authoritative interpretation and teaching when He announced: "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:21).

The people were astounded; many were offended (Matthew 13:57). There was talk of "nonsense" or "foolishness" ("words of grace" is a euphemism for 'nonsense'!). They even questioned His background and family connections.

Yet that prophecy in Isaiah was fulfilled in the following approximately three years of Yeshua's public

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Two Legitimate Identities In Yeshua

Igor Swiderski

continue

"the God of Israel." Paul had brought the God of Israel to the Roman empire through the Messiah of Israel, Yeshua, based on the Scriptures of Israel, the Bible. As a result, people were filled with the Holy Spirit who had previously only been at work on behalf of Israel. All these reports are summarized by Luke, the author of the Acts of the Apostles, in a single verse:

"Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry." (Acts 21:19)

Why does he write about this so laconically? Perhaps because he had already written about it before. Moreover, Luke has a completely different goal in mind when he writes this report. He wants to draw our attention to something else entirely.

While Paul was ministering to the Gentiles, what fruits had been borne so far in the ministry among the Jews? James tells us that they were not on vacation: thousands upon thousands of Jews had come to faith in the Messiah Yeshua. The Lord had also been working among His people. The interesting thing is that these Jews who had come to faith in Jesus were emulating the Law, that is, the Torah (Acts 21:20). What is going on here? Didn't they 'read the memo'? Don't they know that we are now in the New Testament? Yes, of course they do. They believe in Yeshua. He forgave them their sins. He is the Messiah, the risen Son of God. They are also filled with the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, they continue to live according to the Torah, just like Jews. Take away the Torah, and there are no more Jews, only Germans, French, Americans, Brazilians, Nigerians, etc. Wherever Jews live, they will simply dissolve and assimilate. But the Torah determines Jewish life and how we as Jews can continue to live in this renewed covenant with God.

But somehow that doesn't sound kosher, especially to Christian ears, does it? The Jews believe in Jesus and continue to live as Jews. How can this be understood? Perhaps they haven't read Paul. For Paul sometimes makes definitive statements about the law, the Torah, that seem completely at odds with such behavior. So maybe these Jerusalem Jews haven't read Paul's writings yet? Oh, I think they are very familiar with them. Because that is precisely the subject of the conversation in Acts 21. The Jerusalem Jews have either read Paul's writings or heard rumors about his statements. In any case, it seems so important to them that these misunderstandings must be cleared up.

They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs. What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you have come, so do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a vow. Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everyone will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law. (Acts 21:21-24)

Jewish tradition is important. It is

the interpretation of the Torah that connects it to our lives today and enables us to live according to the Torah in the modern world. The apostles in Jerusalem had heard that Paul was teaching that Jews who came to faith in Jesus must stop being Jews and no longer follow the Torah or traditions. For the Messianic Jews in Jerusalem, it is so important that these rumors be dispelled that they have even developed a strategy to do so. There were men who had taken a vow, and Paul was to join them in the sacrifice at the temple. This would confirm that these rumors were false and that Paul himself still lived according to the strictest rules of Jewish tradition.

This would have been the perfect moment for Paul, as he so often does, to bang his fist on the table and say, „Dear Jews, my beloved brothers and sisters according to the flesh, when will you finally grow up? The law is gone, everything is new, there are no more Jews, there are only Gentiles, and we can now do everything like the Gentiles. You must start eating pork and forget all these Jewish rules!" If Paul really thinks this way, or something similar, he would have had to say something at this point. But what happens next is shocking! Here we get to know Paul from a side we may not have known before. What is he doing?! He says nothing, but simply does exactly what James and the elders expect of him:

The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them. (Acts 21:26)

Was Paul broken over the knee here? Did Paul suddenly become afraid of the authorities of the faith in Jerusalem? That is not very likely. Paul is a man of his spiritual convictions. His priority is that God be pleased with him, not people. He has no qualms about rebuking even people in authority. He himself tells us about the incident in Antioch (ca. 48-49 AD), where he rebuked Simon Peter, the first apostle of Yeshua, in front of everyone else (Gal 2:11). And here, in Acts 21, he has declared himself willing to give his life for the Lord, even though he has been warned against it. Paul cannot be defeated. We should therefore take his actions seriously. Through his actions at the temple, Paul destroys the rumors that were circulating that he was teaching the Jews to stop being Jews. That was never the case with Paul. He himself lived according to the Torah and, of course, taught all Jews to live Jewishly according to the Torah. But why then does he write some statements about the law as if the law were no longer relevant and the commandments no longer valid? Because he is doing something important by doing so. He is protecting the non-Jewish identity in Yeshua. We will come to that in a moment.

Jewish Identity in Yeshua

First of all, we should understand what the apostles are accomplishing through their conversation with Paul. Nothing other than this: they are protecting Jewish identity in Yeshua. Their vision is not that Israel will cease to exist because they now believe in Yeshua, i.e., because they are "Christians". Incidentally, 'Christian' is a term for non-Jews who come to believe in Jesus (Acts 11:26). Jews are never referred to as "Christians" in the New Testament. They are not Christians in this context. The first Jewish followers of the Messiah who believed in Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, saved only through Yeshua, called themselves "the Way" (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23) or perhaps "the poor" (Gal 2:10). They were Jews who followed Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, the greatest Jew of all time, in a Jewish way. Paul never questioned Jewish identity, not even for Jews who followed the Messiah. By asking Paul to dispel the rumors described above by participating in the temple sacrifice, they protected their Jewish identity in Yeshua. But not only Jewish identity.

As for the Gentile believers, we have written to them our decision that they should abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. (Acts 21:25)

James, the elders of the Jerusalem church, and Paul were all of the same opinion: Jews who believe in Yeshua must live as Jews according to the Torah. However, they say something different regarding the nations/Gentiles, quoting their ruling, which we read about in Acts 15.

Non-Jewish Identity in Yeshua

There was a time when the non-Jewish identity in Yeshua was in danger of being wiped out. The decision of the apostles in Acts 15 was preceded by the following account. In Antioch, a city north of Israel, the first large group of non-Jews came to faith. They came in droves to believe in the God of Israel through the Messiah of Israel, were filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to read the Jewish Scriptures (the Bible). Then some Jews came from Jerusalem and told them to be circumcised. Paul, who heard about this, raised an uproar and strongly opposed this demand. However, since he did not have the authority to make a final decision, the leadership of the faith in Yeshua in Jerusalem was consulted (Acts 15:1-2). It would actually be quite logical to simply integrate the non-Jews

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YEAR OF REDEMPTION

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continue

ministry. The lame walked, the blind saw, the deaf heard, the sick were healed. And then when YESHUA was betrayed, mocked, denied, tortured, and crucified, He fulfilled another prophecy of Isaiah found in Isaiah 53: "The punishment is upon him for our peace, and by his wounds we are healed!" (see also Matthew 8:17 and 1 Peter 2:24).

That prophecy was given hundreds of years before messiah was born. There are many such "hidden references" to the Messiah in the Scriptures. For example, let's look at the word 'fifty' and find some of these hidden gems.

Hebrew letters are also used to denote numbers. For example, ALEPH is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet and so is used to denote the number 1. Likewise, the letter NUN is used to denote the number 50.

A Hebrew word that sounds like NUN is ANIN. ANIN means 'gentle'. YESHUA is "gentle and humble in heart" (Matthew 11:28-29).

Another Hebrew word that starts with the letter NUN is NER which means "lamp or light". YESHUA himself is "the light of the world" (Jn 8:12), who in turn makes his followers "the light of the world" (see Mt 5:13).

The first work of creation was LIGHT. Genesis 1:3 says, "...Let there be light..." Light came into being through God's WORD. According to the Gospel of John and the Book of Revelation, YESHUA is "The WORD." (John 1:1 and 1 John 1:1-3 and Rev. 19:13).

There's more. Psalm 119 is an acrostic: For each of the 22 characters of the Hebrew alphabet there are 8 verses beginning with that letter. The opening verse of the NUN section in the Psalm 119 is:

"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path." (Ps 119:105).

In early Paleo-Hebrew, the letter BET depicted a house: Ñ . In the same way, in early Paleo-Hebrew, the letter NUN (today NUN SOFIT) depicted a fish moving through the water: ß

This leads us to another interesting truth: The 'fish' was the secret symbol of the messianic movement of the first centuries. In Greek, the world language of that time, the word for fish is ICHTHYS. If this word is taken as an acronym, with each letter representing a word, then we get: I (= Jesus / YESHUA) CH (=Christ / Messiah) TH (=theòs / God's) Y (=Yios / Son) S (=Sotèr / Savior) or Jesus the Messiah, Son of God, Savior!

Another tidbit: NUN was also the name of JOSHUA's father (Joshua ben Nun). Joshua, Moses' successor, led Israel to the Promised Land. His name in Hebrew is Yehoshua. From the name of Yehoshua, the name YESHUA was derived and was a popular name in the first century AD. The meaning of the name is "God saves"! Which is indeed both the calling and the life plan of YESHUA.

Furthermore, we know that YESHUA is a "ben David," a "son of David." The number of the name David (the sum of the numerical value of the individual letters) is 14:

David
Dalet = 4
Vav = 6
Dalet = 4
So 4 + 6 + 4 = 14

Hence the special listing of 14 in the genealogy of YESHUA, as found in Matthew Chapter 1!

And NUN is the 14th letter of the Hebrew alphabet!

Here is another gem:

JESHUA is a "NOZRIM," which describes both his geographical origin (YESHUA of Nazareth) and his 'biological' ancestry: For the (future) Messiah is a "NaZeR" (= root, shoot) of Jesse (Isaiah 11:1). Both words begin with a NUN. In addition, the Jewish term for "Christians" to this day is "Nozrim", the Nazarenes. That is, those who follow the Messiah of Nazareth.

Let us look at some Hebrew words - theological terms - that begin with a NUN: NaCHaL means 'heir' or "inheritance." In the Messiah, we are heirs of the promise. We share in the "blessings of Abraham." We are partakers of the "mercies of David." And an "... undefiled and unfading inheritance" is kept for us! (Gal 3:13-14 and 1 Pet 1:3-9)

The word "comfort" also begins with a NUN in Hebrew: NiCHaM. YESHUA is the "consolation of Israel" (see Luke 2:25), who then sends "the other comforter": the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit came on the 50th day after the Feast of Passover, the time when Israel celebrates its redemption from slavery in Egypt. On Passover the sacrificial lamb was slaughtered. On Passover our Passover Lamb, YESHUA was crucified, and He rose again on the Feast of First Fruits. 1 Corinthians 5:7.

This "Feast of the Fifty", also called the Feast of Weeks ('Shavuot') or Pentecost, is celebrated 50 days after Passover in remembrance of the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai.

בעודני בעולם אור העולם אני

(John 9:5)

Through the "outpouring of the Spirit," the ETERNAL One ushers in the time referred to in the Book of Joel, "... after this ..." (Joel 3:1 or 2:28). In YESHUA the "New Covenant" is 'cut' (Jer 31:31-34). Through the "blood of the Lamb" that "takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), redemption has come. The "Ruach HaKadosh", the Holy Spirit, comes to remain forever with the followers of the Messiah (John 14:16-18, 26). HE is the Comforter. Through His "indwelling," He brings about the "... new heart ..." (Ezekiel 36:26-27). Now life in HIS order is "written in the heart."

At the same time as this "sealing by the Holy Spirit," we are given the "down payment" or advance payment on our future, certain inheritance. (Eph 1:14)

"But we have not received the spirit of this world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know what has been «graciously given «to us." For "He Himself—the Spirit—testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. But if we are children, then we are also heirs. Heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ." (1 Cor 2:12 and Rom 8:16-17)

This is when the messianic YEAR OF REDEMPTION reaches its completion!

Thus, the YEAR OF REDEMPTION of the ETERNAL can be described using the number 50 as the messianic message: from REDEMPTION by YESHUA comes a personal YEAR OF REDEMPTION. Even more: a YEAR OF ENTRANCE "into the kingdom of God" („... transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of HIS beloved Son ..." (Col 1:14) – lies in your hands.

Or in other words: It is left to your heart; it is up to you to decide. YESHUA says: "Come to me, all you who are «burnt out «by religious duties and dubious paths to salvation! I will show you the way to the» Sabbath rest «of your life that is promised to you. Take my yoke upon you, for I myself am gentle and humble in heart ..." (Mt 11:28) – who leads your souls "to green pastures and quiet waters" – to the source of life (Ps 16:11 and 26:10)! "Whoever is thirsty, come to me! I will give him water to drink from the water of life – FREE OF CHARGE!" (Rev 21:6)

And now the pure GOSPEL—the good news—the message of victory: You don't have to wait for some "fifty" in your life! The offer is valid "immediately!"

Jewish Baptism

Marcel Marhuenda

When a Jew is baptized in the name of Yeshua, he is following a "purely Jewish" tradition. The word 'baptism' comes from a Greek word meaning "complete immersion in water". In Hebrew, it is called tevilah (full immersion) and takes place in a mikveh (water place, basin).

The New Covenant, like baptism or tevilah, was first given to the people of Israel and then to the nations. Consequently, we read in Jeremiah 31:31: "'The days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah."

Also, in Matthew 10:6 it is written: "Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel." Then Yeshua says in Matthew 15:24: "He answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.'" Shortly before Yeshua was manifested to Israel: "And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." (Mark 1:4)

This is the tevilah for a genuine teshuvah, i.e., a deep repentance and a return to the writings of the Bible and not to the traditions of the pious. After His resurrection, Yeshua gave the Great Commission to His disciples to tell the whole world about Him. In that Great Commission, Yeshua commanded all who come to Him to go through tevilah (baptism) in His name.

Acts 1:8: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'"

Matthew 28:19-20: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'"

In fact, baptism (or tevilah) is a Jewish custom that originated long before the arrival of Yeshua or even "John the Baptist" (Yochanan HaMatbil). In Hebrew, tevilah means "immersion," as does the Greek word baptize, which means 'baptism' or "immersion." The word tevilah comes from the Hebrew verb tabal, which means "to make wet, to soak, to immerse." This is clearly expressed in 2 Kings 5:14, where Elisha tells the Syrian Naaman to immerse himself seven times in the Jordan River in order to be healed of leprosy.

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Two Legitimate Identities In Yeshua

Igor Swiderski

continue

into “Am Israel” (the people of Israel). Then they could believe in the God of Israel as Jews. This would actually simplify matters considerably for those of us who are Messianic Jews. “It’s good to be me. I’ll just be exactly who I am!” That would be the motto. But under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the apostles decided completely differently—illogically and radically. They argued as follows: „If God has filled these non-Jews with the Holy Spirit through faith in Yeshua just as He has filled us, and they are therefore already kosher for God as uncircumcised, why should we continue to ‘kosher’ them (make them kosher)? No, we will value and protect their non-Jewish identity in Yeshua.“ Protect them from whom? From our identity, the Jewish one.

The Problem in the Relationship Between Two identities

In other words, Acts 15 and 21 express the following: there are two legitimate identities in Yeshua. For the Jews: to believe in Him as Jews. For the non-Jews: to believe in Him as non-Jews. And so we are one. There is no difference in our relationship with Yeshua, because we are saved through Him alone.

However, the following must be noted: The Jewish apostles, if I may put it bluntly, did a great favor to all the non-Jews who came to believe in the Jewish Messiah. They preserved their non-Jewish identity in Yeshua. They decided to value and protect this non-Jewish identity in Yeshua. But this favor, so to speak, was unfortunately never returned...

A few generations later, when the leadership of the faith in Yeshua had shifted from Jerusalem, it was no longer the Jews but the non-Jews who were at the helm. And a new decision was made: there should now be only one, not two, legitimate identities in Yeshua. That is the Christian, i.e., non-Jewish identity. In the 7th century, Christians prepared a vow for Jews who wanted to come to faith in the now Christian Jesus Christ. They had apparently forgotten that he was the Jewish Messiah, and so Jews who came to believe in Jesus were not allowed to remain Jews. They had to stop being Jews. A Jew who wanted to believe in his Jewish Messiah had to take the following oath in the 7th century:

I hereby renounce every rite and observance of the Jewish religion and detest all its most solemn ceremonies and teachings, which I have maintained and observed in former days. In future, I will not practice any rite or ceremony connected with it, nor any custom of my former error, and I promise not to seek or perform them.

People had completely forgotten that there are two legitimate identities in Yeshua: The Jewish and the non-Jewish. At that time, only one was allowed: the non-Jewish identity. The motto was: “If you are a Jew, you must stop being a Jew in order to believe in our Jesus Christ.” Is that the right attitude? Hardly. But unfortunately, that is exactly what is happening today.

A few years ago, I was at a huge Christian conference in Indonesia. A few Messianic Jews were also there. A few of us—and a thousand of our non-Jewish brothers and sisters. In the morning at the hotel, I sat down in a corner and wanted to enjoy my coffee in peace. Suddenly, another conference participant sat down across from me because there was no other place to sit. We started talking. After a while, he said, “Wait, are you a Messianic Jew? I’m Jewish too.” I replied, “What exactly do you mean?” I wanted to know; these days, you never know. Some people have dreams about supposed Jewish relatives from many generations ago and believe that this makes them Jewish. “I was born into a Jewish family,” the young man explained. He went on to say that his parents are Jewish, they took him to synagogue, celebrated Jewish holidays, etc., etc. “And then?” I asked, holding my breath. “Then I went to college, where I learned about Jesus, so I became a Christian.” That means Sunday instead of Saturday, Christmas instead of Hanukkah, etc. Why did this young man reject his entire Jewish identity? For a heartbreaking reason: he met the Jewish Messiah. To me, that makes as much sense as a Frenchman inviting his Bavarian friend to Oktoberfest. “But please wear your lederhosen!” the Frenchman tells him. At Oktoberfest, the Frenchman urges, “Now you have to drink a whole liter of beer!” When the Bavarian drinks the last drop, the Frenchman rejoices, “Et voilà, now you’re a real Frenchman. Congratulations!” Lederhosen, beer, and Oktoberfest are all part of Bavarian culture. Participating in them would only strengthen Bavarian identity, not change it. So why should a Jew who was born into a Jewish home and valued his Jewish identity suddenly become “un-Jewish” because he has come to know the most righteous Jew of all time, the Jewish Messiah, Yeshua? My conversation partner at the conference never had to swear such a vow, as Jews did in the 7th century. So why did he simply abandon his “Jewishness” so easily? The answer is clear: because the dear brothers and sisters who had introduced him to the Jewish Messiah did not know that there are two legitimate identities in Yeshua: The Jewish and the non-Jewish. Unaware of this, they showed him the way to a non-Jewish identity, and he followed it 100%.

I recently spoke with a Messianic rabbi from America, and he told me the story of a non-Jew in his congregation who had decided to be circumcised. This rabbi said to me, “I don’t know why he needs to do this, and he really shouldn’t, but if he wants to, I will help him.” I wonder if Paul would have helped him. Would James have helped non-Jews become Jews?

Two Legitimate Identities in Yeshua

Too often, we easily forget that there are two completely legitimate identities in Yeshua: the Jewish identity for Jews and the non-Jewish identity for people from all other nations. Some are saved in Yeshua and follow Him through the Torah. The other followers of Yeshua learn a lot from the Torah, but do not live according to the Torah like the Jews. We—Jews and the nations in Yeshua—need each other to pray for each other, to support each other, to learn from each other, to bless each other, to praise the Lord together. But above all, we need the wisdom and courage to value and protect the identity of the other. This is what Yeshua’s apostles did: in Yeshua there are two legitimate identities.

We need each other! In the time of the apostles, you, our beloved non-Jewish brothers and sisters, needed us more than we needed you. At that time the non-Jewish identity in Yeshua was in danger of being outlawed. I think that today the case is exactly the opposite: We, the Messianic Jews, need you much more than you need us. In 325, at another council, not the apostolic one but the Council of Nicaea, Christianity decided to have nothing more to do with Jews. Then 200 years later the Messianic Jewish movement came to a complete halt. But 300 years after the Reformation, when many changes took place in society, the Messianic Jewish movement suddenly flourished again.

In summary, we need you to help us bring the Jewish Messiah to His Jewish people, but done in a way that does not cause the Jewish people to cease to exist. We need your help so that Jewish people can meet their Messiah as Jews and follow Him as Jews. We also need you for our calling to be a light to the nations. We need each other, but only if we are willing to accept this fundamental truth: There are two legitimate identities in Yeshua. This will greatly enhance the quality of our unity.

Jewish Baptism

Marcel Marhuenda

continue

2 Kings 5:14: “So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.”

Purification in water is a symbol of cleansing (but also of spiritual death and resurrection in God as new life).

“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” (Romans 6:4)

“and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also – not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience towards God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 3:21)

In the Old Covenant, Isaiah said (1:16): “Wash yourselves, cleanse yourselves …”, and Zechariah prophesied about the future of Israel (13:1): “On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.”. Moreover Ezekiel prophesied concerning Israel (36:25): “I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols.”

In Numbers 31:23 we read: “and anything else that can withstand fire must be put through the fire, and then it will be clean. But it must also be purified with the water of cleansing (in which the ashes of the red cow were mixed). And whatever cannot withstand fire must be put through that water.” And in Leviticus 11:36: “A spring, however, or a cistern for collecting water (mikva’ot mayim) remains clean, but anyone who touches one of these carcasses is unclean.”

Archaeological Excavations in Israel: an Ancient Jewish mikvah

The ‘mikvah’ (literally “water collection”) is a way of purifying people and objects, as there are many (often unavoidable) causes of impurity: contact with a corpse, childbirth, menstruation, and various diseases. Archaeological excavations in Jerusalem have uncovered many ritual baths for Jews who came to the Temple before its destruction in 70 AD. Some mikva’ot (plural of mikva) have also been found elsewhere; for example in the fortress of Masada or in the ruins of the Qumran community.

Now as in the past, the mikvah is built according to precise rules and is filled with pure water from absolutely clean pipes. After the war in 70 AD and the destruction of the Temple, many laws of purification were no longer observed. However, the mikvah retained its great importance in Jewish community life.

About 2,000 years ago, there were several small water basins (mikva’ot) in the vicinity of the Temple in Jerusalem for priests and

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Jewish Baptism

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continue

shippers, who purified themselves before entering the Temple. There were also mikva'ot near synagogues throughout Israel. In Masada, in Qumran, in the Old Jewish Quarter in Jerusalem, you can see the remains of these ancient mikva'ot. Many were carved out of rock and filled with rainwater or spring water. They were not only used by the men and women in Israel, but also at all times and in all places where Jews settled.

In the First Temple built by Solomon, there were 10 basins for cleansing the burnt offerings, and the bronze sea was used for ritual cleansing.

2 Chronicles 4:6: "He (Solomon) then made ten basins for washing and placed five on the south side and five on the north. In them the things to be used for the burnt offerings were rinsed, but the Sea (1 Kings 7:23) was to be used by the priests for washing."

1 Kings 7:23: "He (Solomon) made the Sea of cast metal, circular in shape, measuring ten cubits from rim to rim and five cubits high. It took a line of thirty cubits to measure round it."

25: "The Sea stood on twelve bulls, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south and three facing east. The Sea rested on top of them, and their hindquarters were towards the centre."

38: "He then made ten bronze basins, each holding forty baths and measuring four cubits across, one basin to go on each of the ten stands."

39: "He placed five of the stands on the south side of the temple and five on the north. He placed the Sea on the south side, at the southeast corner of the temple."

In Micah 7:19 we read: "You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea ('yam')." (Does this image refer to the actual sea or to the basin in the temple, the so-called "sea"? I am more inclined to believe the latter.)

Leviticus 8:5,6 :"Moses said to the assembly, 'This is what the Lord has commanded to be done.' Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons forward and washed them with water."

Hebrews 9:10 reveals that in the Old Covenant there were "... various washings ... ", which in the Greek is baptismos (immersions). In my opinion, although the word "washings" can refer to a simple cleansing of the face, hands, and feet, in this case the Greek word is baptismo (immersion) and the Hebrew word for "washing" means to wash out, to wash clean. There were, of course, hand and foot washings, but there were also cleansing baths.

In the 12th century, Maimonides wrote: „It is clear that the instructions regarding immersion to remove impurity are regulations from the Holy Scriptures... Impurity does not consist of dirt or filth that can be removed by water. The sages have said: If a person immerses himself (in the mikvah) without pure intentions, it is as if he had not immersed himself; but if someone resolves in his heart to rid himself of the impurity that defiles the soul of man—such as evil thoughts, for example—that person becomes pure at the moment of immersion, even though nothing physical has happened.

In Ezekiel 36:25 it says: "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols."

Today, among observant Jews, the immersion service always takes place in a mikvah. The mikvah can be a river, the sea, but especially a basin with very specific dimensions. The immersion must be complete—not a single hair may remain out of the water for the purification to be complete. This spiritual purification through immersion in water takes place before the Sabbath and Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement). Jewish women must also go to the mikvah after their menstruation to be purified. And when a non-Jew converts to Judaism, he must undergo circumcision, then tevilah (baptism) in the mikvah, in order to die as a non-Jew and be reborn as a Jew. Doesn't this remind us of the new birth in Yeshua?

Rabbis teach that In the case of conversion, as soon as someone converts to Judaism, he becomes like a newborn.

The mikvah can be thought of figuratively as a woman giving birth, enabling the birth process. So, the person who immerses himself in the mikvah enters the realm of non-life, only to be reborn when he emerges from the water.

When John the Immerser (Yochanan ha-Matbil) began to preach repentance and immersion in the waters of the Jordan, he was not proclaiming a new custom to the Jews. He remained within the framework of a custom known to the Jews: the tevilah or baptism. It was his proclamation that attracted the crowds, not baptism as a new custom in Israel. For the Jewish disciples of Yeshua, this baptism was merely the continuation of a common custom, now performed in the name of the Messiah. So, a Jew who comes to Yeshua receives forgiveness from God and finds his place again in "His tree," the olive tree cultivated by God; that is, the Israel of God and the faith of Abraham. When a non-Jew comes to Yeshua, on the other hand, he is like a branch from a wild olive tree that is grafted into the cultivated olive tree, Israel. So Paul was able to say to the Ephesians:

„Do not forget, you Gentiles, where you came from! Remember that you are not native Jews ... Do not forget that at that time, when you were living without the Messiah, you were excluded from the citizenship of Israel, the chosen people of God; you were strangers to the covenant made in promise to Israel, and you had no hope for the future, and you were without God in the world. But now, in Yeshua ha Mashiach, you who were once far away have been brought near by the blood of the Messiah." (Ephesians 2:11-13; expanded)

So, Jews and non-Jews who believe in Messiah Yeshua and have been immersed in the mikvah (baptism) become one people who are all equal before God.

"This means that there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles—the Lord is the same for all, rich toward all who call upon Him." (Romans 10:12)

I conclude with this short story; it is funny, but its meaning has caused much suffering over the centuries.

I was talking to a Catholic woman and said that Jesus was a Jew. She replied, "Yes, He was a Jew, but when He was baptized, He became a Catholic..."

Such ignorance may make one smile, but unfortunately, many nominal Christians, as well as rabbis, have told Jews that after their baptism in Yeshua, they were no longer Jews.

How can a Jewish Messiah who came as the Savior of His people Israel turn a Jew who believes in Him into a non-Jew? Such a thought is meaningless. In fact, the opposite is true for the non-Jews.

But of Zion it is said, "Every man is born there."

"Indeed, of Zion it will be said, 'This one and that one were born in her, and the Most High himself will establish her.' 6 The Lord will write in the register of the peoples: 'This one was born in Zion.'" (Psalm 87:5-6)

Unfortunately, the vast majority of non-Jewish Christians act as if they have forgotten Israel, their birthplace. Fortunately, however, more and more sincere Christians are grateful to God for Israel, because Jesus himself told us that salvation came from the Jews. So let us bless with our prayers and deeds this land of Israel, which God has given back to those to whom it belongs, the Jewish people. Today, Messianic Jews who believe in Yeshua are growing in number in Israel and throughout the world—until the day when all Israel will be saved at the arrival of the Messiah in Jerusalem.

"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit[1] of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son." (Zechariah 12:10)

Glory be to God!

The History of the Menorah

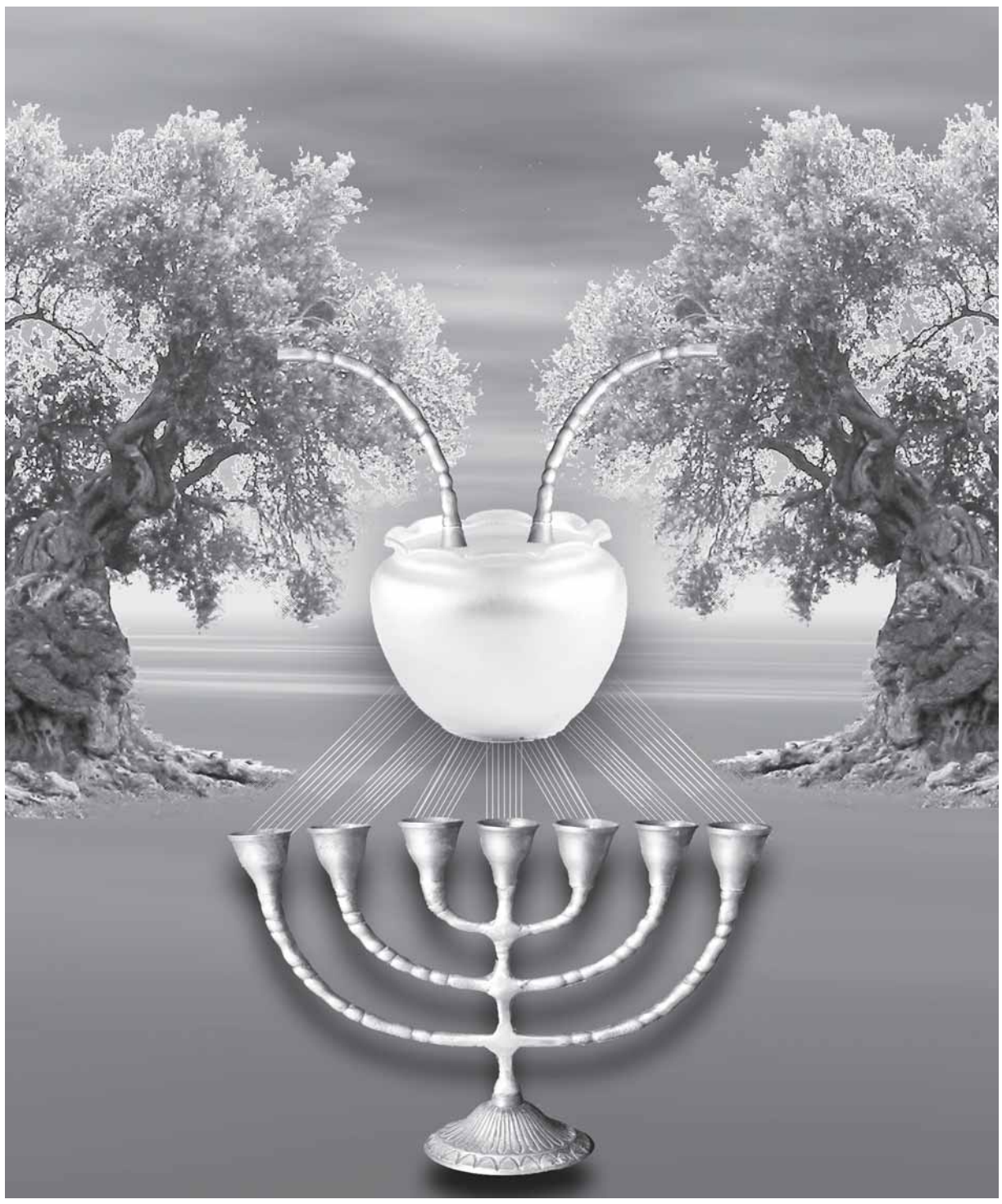
Leonid Banchik

Many nations have symbols: Canada has the maple leaf; Lebanon has the cedar tree; Russia has the birch tree. Similarly, the symbol of the nation of Israel is the seven-branched menorah. The design of the menorah may have come from a plant, because its shape resembles the Jerusalem sage. In addition, the Aramaic name for sage, "merva", reminds us of Mount Moriah, where the Temple once stood in which was the menorah.

Moses received a detailed description of the menorah from the Lord (Exodus 25:31–39). It is not easy to make a candlestick based solely on a verbal description. Therefore, God showed Moses what the menorah and its parts should look like: "See that you make them according to the pattern shown you on the mountain" (Exodus 25:40).

For a long time, the menorah on the Arch of Triumph in Rome was considered its oldest representation. For many centuries, Jewish homes and synagogues used menorahs that were based on this model. However, doubts lingered about its shape. People often questioned the rounded shape of the arms on the Roman menorah and the lack of a three-legged base. The evidence of these discussions can be seen on many coins, mosaics, and tombstones, where the menorah is depicted with both rounded and right-angled arms.

After 1967, Israeli archaeologists began excavations in the Jewish Quarter in Jerusalem, which in ancient times was called the "Upper City." One discovery followed another. Today, in the museum of the Jordanian Quarter, you can see the remains of several wealthy houses from the 1st century CE, one of which may have belonged to the high priest. Perhaps Caiaphas or Hannas lived there. All the houses were destroyed in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD, but wonderful floor mosaics, mikvahs, and various pieces of tableware have been preserved. One of the most precious finds is one of the earliest drawings of a menorah on the wall, possibly drawn by the high priest or someone in his household. This recently discovered menorah differs from the Roman one and re-ignited the debate about the shape of the temple lampstand.



As with many things, it is not the form of the menorah that is as important as what it represents. To understand its significance, consider the vision of the prophet Zechariah:

„And the angel who spoke to me came back and woke me up, as one awakens from sleep, and said to me, ‚What do you see? And I said, ‚I see, and behold, there is a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl at the top and seven lamps on it, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, and two olive trees there, one on the right side of the bowl and the other on its left. And I answered and said to the angel who spoke to me, ‚My lord, what is this? And the angel who spoke to me answered and said to me, 'Do you not know what this is?' And I said, 'No, my lord'"(Zechariah 4:1–5).

Had Zechariah ever seen the menorah? Of course he had. So why did he ask, " What is this?" He was surprised by the unusual appearance of the lampstand. An image appeared before the prophet's eyes: in the lower part was the menorah he knew from the Temple, but everything else, above and to the sides, was an unusual sight. The menorah in the Temple was regularly filled with new oil by the priests, but Zechariah saw another one that gave off light without human intervention. Today, we would say that it was an automatic menorah. But this "automatic" device in Zechariah's vision was controlled by God.

How does such a candlestick work? The olive trees "supply" the oil, which then flows by gravity into the bowl and from there through small tubes to the lamps. Seven is the number of perfection, but here we see a kind of hyper-perfection, because the number of tubes is seven times seven. This image shows us God's care for Israel and for all who believe in Christ. This image also shows us how He fills our hearts with the Holy Spirit.

God is light, and the menorah also represents our witness to the world: "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

The menorah symbolizes the church where sound doctrine is preached. In the last book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation, the Lord warns the church in Ephesus: "Remember therefore how you have fallen; repent and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent" (Rev. 2:5). This shows us that in churches that stray from the Gospel, the lampstand that is filled by the Holy Spirit is missing!

The two olive trees in Zechariah's vision symbolize the names of Zerubbabel and the high priest Joshua, who belong to the genealogical tree of kings and high priests. At the time of Zechariah's vision, they were the political and spiritual leaders of Israel. In the literal translation, "sons of fresh oil" means children of purity, children of the Holy Spirit. Through Zerubbabel and Joshua, but also through Haggai and Zechariah, God instructed Israel in the first decades after their return from the Babylonian Captivity. Revelation 11:4 speaks of two other future olive trees of God – the two witnesses of God, the prophets of the Great Tribulation. The Lord will also take care of refilling His lampstands during that very difficult time for humanity.

The fate of the menorah after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem is sad. Flavius Josephus described the triumphal procession that took place in Rome:

„The rest of the spoils were carried away in disorder, but among them the objects from the Temple of Jerusalem stood out in particular – a golden table weighing several talents and a candlestick, also made entirely of gold, but different in shape from the candlesticks we use. The middle candlestick represented a solid trunk extending from the base. Thin arms branched off from it, arranged like a trident, and a lamp was attached to the top of each of them. There were seven of them, which indicates the Jews' veneration of the number seven" (The Jewish War).

After his triumphal procession, Emperor Vespasian ordered the construction of a pagan temple in Rome where, among other Temple spoils, the menorah was displayed. Its location after the fall of the Roman Empire is unknown. Actually, after Christ's sacrificial death, there was no longer any need for the Temple candlestick. Here is a very interesting testimony from the Talmud (Tractate Ioma):

"Forty years before the destruction of the Temple, the lamp that had previously burned indestructibly began to go out, and the gates of the sanctuary began to open by themselves."

Subtract forty years from the year 70 AD and you get the time of Jesus Christ's earthly ministry. Jesus said: "I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). While the Lord walked on earth, the menorah in the temple began to go out, because the true light is in Him and not in the sacrifices in the Temple. It is a pity that most of the Jewish people did not understand this at the time.

The emblem of the State of Israel depicts a menorah flanked by two olive trees. How important it is that it burns again indestructibly! We must do everything possible to ensure that the light of Christ continues to ignite new hearts in people, and that those lamps never go out.

Interview with Alexander Goldberg who works with Israeli Messianic congregations at the Caspari Center, Jerusalem

My name is Alexander Goldberg, and I work at the Caspari Center in Jerusalem. It was founded in 1982 by the Norwegian Israel mission “Service for Israel” in cooperation with other Scandinavian Lutheran missions. We also have a German partner, EDI (Evangeliumsdienst für Israel e.V.), whose representative is Anatoli Uschomirski. The center’s mission is two-fold:

to provide theological training to Israeli believers and to build bridges between Messianic believers and Christians. This means that we help Christians who are searching for the Jewish roots of their faith by offering them various courses and seminars. For example, we recently held a seminar called “The Search for Jesus in the Jewish Context”. We also held a seminar for those interested in coming to Israel to gather information and for Bible school students.

What is your role in this?

I am the director of the work with the Israeli Messianic congregations. However, I also participate in the international aspect of our ministry. For example, I regularly give lectures to foreign Christians who visit us. But my main task is to develop the Caspari ministry to assist Israeli Messianic congregations.

You give lectures and probably have special training for that?

I am about to complete my master’s degree in Practical Theology.

How extensive is the spectrum of Messianic congregations in Israel that you deal with?

We strive to serve as many congregations as possible. But since no one can do everything with everyone, we focus on ministering to those who work with children. Here, it is not so important what you think about praying in “other” languages or what your attitude is toward Jewish traditions. When working with children, it is much easier to find common ground. As far as theological courses are concerned, we do not award diplomas. There is a Bible college in Israel that does just that, founded about the same time as our center. So, the Caspari Center decided to specialize in discipleship training. Our programs change every year to meet ongoing needs. We are a small country and don’t have many believers. It is quite difficult to repeat the same topic every year.

You said that you have few believers in Israel. Are there any statistics on this?

We are currently working on a book that will be published soon. It will include figures. As far as I know, there are about 250 Messianic congregations in Israel, consisting of Jews and non-Jews; that is, people who have some connection to Jews. According to our calculations, there are between 12,000 and 15,000 people in these congregations. That is a small number compared to the total population of Israel, which is over 8 million.

Does that include the Arab population?

Yes, the Arab population in Israel is almost 2 million. Based on that calculation, the proportion of Israeli believers in Yeshua is less than 1% of the total population.

Are there any points of contact between these communities? Are there perhaps “alliances”? Or does the Caspari Center perhaps take on this mediating role?

I can say with certainty that we at the Caspari Center, although we are abbreviated “ZK” do not play this role. We are a small organization. And anyway, it starts with the fact that if Jews are a people of individualists, then Israelis are considered to be extreme individualists. Of course, connections arise between the communities; they are not islands in the ocean. The main connection is theology. For example, we have an informal association with the Baptist Reformed congregations.

To which Jews also belong?

Of course! We have about five such communities. However, that doesn’t mean that they have it easier now that they have such a connection. But at least there is now an opportunity to exchange ideas at the leadership level. For example, there is Pastor David Zadok, who publishes Calvin’s books in Hebrew and actively distributes them. There are still people like that who came from the Soviet Union but matured spiritually in Israel and share such convictions.

Are they Russian-speaking?

Yes, but not exclusively. The reformist “patriarch” of Israel, Baruch Maoz, immigrated from the US. David Zadok, his student, is almost a true-blue Israeli who came here from Iran as a child, if I’m not mistaken. He leads a Hebrew-speaking Baptist congregation.

That’s interesting! Don’t these five congregations belong to the usual number of Messianic congregations in Israel?

Why not? Yes, they do. We call them all “Messianic,” regardless of their respective denominational affiliations. In this we differ from the diaspora.

Then you probably also know charismatic congregations. Which denominations have more congregations?

I think that here there are definitely more charismatic ones. But even these differ from one another. In Israel; we have our own idea of what a Messianic congregation is. Our idea may differ from that of other people who live outside of Israel. For Orthodox Jews, we are all Messianic Jews or, as they call us, “Christians.” But we try very hard to prove to them that we are not “Christians” but Jews. Nevertheless, they consider us ‘Christians’ who are “pretending” to be Jewish. That is why we call ourselves in Israel “Yehudim meschichim (Hebr. Messianic Jews)”, which means Jews who believe in the Messiah. This does not automatically mean that all congregations have a Sefer Torah (Hebr.: Torah scroll), and you can count on the fingers of one hand the congregations that require living completely according to Halacha or at least partially observing the

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The Arab Brother

Hanry Fishbein

„By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.“ John 13:35

On a stifling summer night, the air was charged with tension. Six soldiers of the Israeli Defense Forces were moving through a settlement in southern Lebanon. Its streets were empty due to a nighttime curfew. Aware that an enemy attack could come from any direction, the men kept turning their heads, moving their entire bodies and weapons along with their gaze.

These soldiers had served in the same unit every year, becoming a well-coordinated team.

Ari held the position of rear guard. He was the oldest in the group, including the commander, but he treated the others as equals. He walked carefully, backwards and forwards, his sweat-soaked uniform clinging to his skin. Ari remembered the fear he used to feel at times like this when he didn't know God and couldn't rely on His protective hand. He also thought about the others who didn't yet have such a relationship and protection. How must they feel? Ari is a messianic believer. Although his friends often argue with him, they treat Ari and his faith with respect. Walking behind the group, Ari smiled as he sees David walking ahead of him. He remembered that just two days ago David accepted Yeshua into his heart and found peace with God. Ari witnessed his conversion when they prayed together behind their tent under a clear, star-filled night sky. Ari and David prayed so fervently that even their unbelieving comrades were affected by their passion.

Ari remembered the discussion that the men had yesterday in the tent, before the alarm sounded. Someone had asked, "If God chose the Jewish people, why does He allow this endless war?" Ari wanted to avoid an argument, so he replied, "God cannot be mocked; it says so in the Bible." To which another probed, "All right, but weren't the Inquisition and the Crusades the work of Christians?" Ari parried, "Who told you that those Christians were genuine believers?" But another friend continued: "We can see that you're a believer, but David? He hasn't changed." Ari laughed and replied, "He's a new creature now, but still very young. A child can't walk immediately after birth." At that point the alarm sounded, ending discussion abruptly.

As the group turned a corner in the settlement in Lebanon that night, Avi heard David whispering, "I hope I don't have to shoot, I hope I don't have to shoot..." In response, Ari put his hand on David's shoulder and encouraged him with a promise from the Scriptures. As they turned another corner, the whole group stopped as they heard the sound of an engine roaring to life. Pressed against a wall marked with graffiti in Arabic, the soldiers listened intently. Suddenly a light shone from the window of a nearby house. The soldiers looked at Ari as if to say, "Well, the prayer didn't help." David whispered, "Where is your faith?", while Ari quoted a Bible verse to himself to dispel any doubt from creeping into his heart.

The commander ordered, "Ari, move forward with David!" Running across the street, the group, led by Ari and David, took up their positions in the shadows against the high fence of the house. Gradually sneaking up to the small gated entrance to the courtyard of the house, the soldiers fell to the ground on either side of the gate. Ignoring his dry throat and rapidly beating heart, Ari slowly tried to push open the gate. The gate would not budge. His hand groped and discovered a lock with wire wrapped around it. "Pliers!" Ari commanded in a whisper. Quickly, David handed him the tool with the long handle. Soon the dull snap of wire being cut sounded in the night. Rising to his feet, Ari commanded, "Follow me!" He kicked open the gate, running through the wide entrance. The others followed, rushing into the courtyard and shouting, "You are surrounded; hands behind your heads!"

A frightened man stood in front of an idling minibus. He had an intelligent look and a beard, as is customary for most Muslims. "Identification papers!" ordered Ari, keeping his finger near the trigger of his gun. The bearded man took out his ID and showed it to Ari, adding in a whisper, "Quiet, you'll wake the children." Just then the heads of three children popped up in the illuminated window of the nearby house.

Ari looked around suspiciously, then walked over to the minibus and stopped. David followed close behind with weapon in hand, ready to respond. Ari took the ID from the man, and held it up to read using the light from the illuminated window. He frowned as he examined the ID, then looked up in astonishment at the man. "This ID states that you are the pastor of the Arab Chrisian community", Ari said slowly. Then Ari raised his eyes toward the starry night sky and exclaimed, "Your glory is above all the heavens!". As the Arab pastor began to realize the situation, the fear on his face was replaced with a smile. Instantly, Avi, David and the pastor embraced each other. Meanwhile, the other soldiers who had rushed in behind Avi and David stood frozen in place, wondering at the strange scene playing out before them. "Everything is fine," Ari reassured the commander. Puzzled at the scene before him, the commander asked, "What, is he a Jew?" Ari answered, "No, he is a local Arab." Now looking confused, the commander asked, "Then why do you hug him like a brother?" Avi replied, "We hug him like a brother because he is also a brother". The commander appeared bewildered as he exclaimed, "How can this be? An Arab is your brother?" Ari explained, "Yes! David, this Arab pastor, and I – we are brothers." With a bright smile on his face, David added, "We are brothers In Yeshua!"

The Eternal Hatred: Anti-Semitism Past and Present

By Andrej Beritski

continue

in schoolyards. A survey of Jewish students in Berlin found that 88% have experienced anti-Semitic insults.

Anti-Semitism has become fashionable, particularly among young people. Anti-Semitic memes and "Jewish jokes" are spreading virally on social media. Sociologist Dr. Felix Klein, the German government's anti-Semitism commissioner, warns: "Anti-Semitism is becoming socially acceptable again, it is being portrayed as rebellious and 'cool' – a highly dangerous development."

The theological dimension

For Messianic Jews and Christians, anti-Semitism has a special theological dimension. The Apostle Paul writes in Romans (11:28-29): "In regard to the gospel, they are enemies for your sake, but in regard to their election, they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. For God's gifts and his call are irrevocable."

Rabbi Shaul Leiter, a prominent Messianic theologian, explains: "The spiritual battle against anti-Semitism begins with the understanding that hatred of Jews is ultimately hatred of God's election. It is an attack on God's faithfulness to His promises."

Christian theologian Dr. Michael Brown emphasizes: "Christians who truly understand their Jewish Messiah must recognize that anti-Semitism is not just a sociopolitical problem, but a direct contradiction to the heart of God. Jesus wept over Jerusalem—not out of hatred, but out of love."

The power of truth in a world of lies

What can we do in the face of this ancient, ever-renewed hatred? How do we, as a community of Messianic Jews and Christians, respond to this challenge?

1. Seek and spread the truth: In an age of deliberate disinformation, meticulous research is a moral imperative. Theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who lost his life in resistance to Nazism, wrote: "To tell the truth is a duty to God."
2. Education as an antidote: Studies consistently show that the more people know about Jewish history, culture, and religion, the less susceptible they are to anti-Semitic prejudices. Knowledge about the Holocaust is dwindling, especially among young people. We must counteract this trend.
3. Raise a prophetic voice: As a messianic community, we are called to be a prophetic voice, not in the sense of making predictions, but in the biblical sense of speaking the truth in love. The prophet Zechariah (8:16) exhorts: "Speak the truth to one another and judge fairly, and make peace in your gates."
4. Building bridges: Messianic Rabbi Jonathan Bernis emphasizes: "Our unique position as Messianic Jews and Christians allows us to build bridges—between Jews and Christians, between Israelis and Palestinians who seek peace, between all people of good will."
5. Prayer and spiritual resistance: The spiritual battle against anti-Semitism begins with prayer. King David, who himself experienced much hostility, wrote: "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" (Psalm 27:1).

A light in the darkness

Messianic teacher Dr. Michael Rydelnik reminds us: "As followers of the Jewish Messiah, we are called to be a light in the darkness. Anti-Semitism is a particularly dark manifestation of human hatred—but where the darkness is deepest, the light shines brightest."

The history of anti-Semitism is a record of human failure, moral blindness, and collective guilt. But it is also a record of survival, resilience, and hope. Despite all the hatred and persecution, the Jewish people have survived, thrived, and preserved their identity—a living testimony to God's faithfulness to keep His promises.

American historian Howard Zinn once said, "You can't be neutral on a moving train." In the face of resurgent anti-Semitism, we too cannot remain neutral. We are called upon to take a stand—for truth, for justice, for coexistence with respect and dignity.

The prophets of Israel repeatedly called for repentance, for teshuva. This repentance begins in our own hearts, in our communities, in the way we think and speak about "the others". At a time when hatred is celebrated as a fad, love is the most radical act of resistance.

In the words of the prophet Micah (6:8): "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

May we, as Messianic Jews and Christians, walk in this calling—as witnesses of truth and hope in a world that so desperately needs both.

Interview with Alexander Goldberg who works with Israeli Messianic congregations at the Caspari Center, Jerusalem

continue

laws of kashrut. So, if Judaism is understood not only as Hanukkah cookies or matzo at Passover, but as a more serious observance of Jewish tradition, then one can certainly understand the Orthodox view of us.

Please tell us: do you see a positive dynamic in the movement as a whole?

Firstly, it is a positive thing that the movement is growing! Secondly, our movement is quite conservative compared to, say, Western Christians. Our hair stands on end when we hear what is happening in the state churches in Scandinavia, for example. I don't just know this from hearsay. There are cases of the blessing of homosexuals. Overall, we also take a conservative position on the role of women as pastors, which is why we have very few women who serve as pastors. But even they do not refer to themselves as pastors, because they know that no one likes that, even though they lead congregations. Third, there is a fairly high proportion of young people among our believers. They are the backbone of the congregations. That gives us hope.

What about aliyah for Messianic Jews? Does the Caspari Center have information about the difficulties faced by Jews who believe in Yeshua and want to immigrate to Israel?

Yes, of course. Every 10 days, a special service compiles all press releases in Israel, both secular and religious, on all topics that concern Christians and Messianic Jews: the topics of Jesus, the New Testament, Jews who believe in Jesus, Jewish-Christian relations, etc. In this way, we see that there are repeated stories about how the Ministry of the Interior does not grant entry visas to Jews who believe in Jesus. We know this, and not only from the press. Even Messianic believers, who have the full right of repatriation to Israel under the Law of Return (i.e., a Jew whose father is Jewish) are constantly being hindered. But legal assistance is expensive, and not everyone can afford it. As a result, they cannot make aliyah.

Is there any mechanism that could be used to counteract this? Is there no way to influence this situation?

In each specific case, you have to hire a lawyer who has the expertise to challenge the decision legally. Or you have to fight for a change in the law, but no one is doing that at the moment. The only place where you can read about this is in the annual report of the US State Department, which deals with religious freedom around the world. In the last report, they emphasized that there is no equality for religious minorities in Israel, and they also mentioned Messianic Jews. This is mentioned quite often, but unfortunately nothing has changed for the better so far.

Thank you very much!

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Mazel Tov! Congratulations!

This topic of Yeshua and the Jews is as entertaining as it is unique. Over the past two millennia, many authors have written their opinions about it. There seems to be no neutrality on the subject. Either their opinions become the basis for the greatest theological works or the catalyst for pogroms and mass murders. Some authors, such as Nikolai Berdyaev, became not just friends of Israel, but its literary apologists, while others, such as Martin Luther, became simply anti-Semites.

Even within the Jewish world there is a broad spectrum of opinions on the subject of Yeshua. According to a long-standing tradition, each shade claims to be the truth. Nevertheless, the messianic movement falls outside the general palette of Judaism. The reason for this is that the messianic movement is based on biblical prophecy and not Jewish traditions. And that is why Kol Hesed is closely linked to the Jewish Scriptures. Indeed, the most famous book published in all the languages of the world is, surprisingly, little known to our Jewish reading public. But it is precisely this book that is, first and foremost, a source of information about Israel.

Anti-Semitism is a phenomenon that has never been explained by anybody, either Jews or non-Jews. I remember a conversation I had with a German woman who told me about her parents. Her mother's relatives served in the SS during World War II in Germany, and her father was from an Arab country. "They still live together," she concluded her sad story, "because they both hate Jews.". In this newspaper, we will also talk about the origins of anti-Semitism.

Does Israel have any friends? If so, who are they? They do exist, and we will meet them in the pages of this newspaper.

And finally, this newspaper will cover history and politics. "There is nothing new under the sun," said King Solomon, and he was right. "The scourge of man," said Michel de Montaigne, "is imaginary knowledge." A person who does not know history will draw wrong conclusions. Take, for example, the so-called Middle East problem. Why are powerful politicians unable to solve it? Nevertheless, the solution to this problem has long been recorded in the Jewish Holy Scriptures. The only problem is that not everyone considers these Scriptures to be sacred. Messianic Jews from Israel are ready to share their knowledge.

So, these 16 pages devoted to the topic of Yeshua and the Jews will surely not leave you indifferent. I wish you abundant blessings from the rejected and beaten, crucified but resurrected, loving and saving, true Messiah of Israel, Yeshua!

Tradition

Kirill Swiderski

Is tradition important or not? If so, to what extent? I remember our early days in Germany. One day, we saw a crowd of people in uniform marching through the streets accompanied by a brass band. They had a military posture and stern expressions: no smiles, everything serious. In the evening, there was a torchlight procession. We were very frightened. Our first reaction was, "These are Nazis!". Later we heard that it was a 'Schützenfest' (marksmen's festival).

On another occasion, I was walking my dog in a Chicago park when I met a group of Jewish children from an Orthodox area. They surrounded me to pet the dog. In a moment, a 16-year-old companion appeared and calmed the children down. We began a conversation, and I learned that the young man was a future rabbi. Immediately, he tried to assert his authority based on his knowledge of the Talmud and tradition. I resisted, so that by the end of the conversation he looked quite discouraged. He remarked, "If you're not an Orthodox Jew, why do you need all this knowledge? And if you are one of us, why do you look different?". Suddenly it became clear to me:

we have a big problem with the definition of the word "tradition." We say 'Judaism' and understand it to mean a person dressed in black who goes to a synagogue. But that's exactly the same as if we equate the word "German" to mean marksman. I'm sure not all Germans would agree with that!

Some early Christians who preached the faith among pagans allowed a mixture of all kinds of cultures and traditions in these new church plantings, which in some cases became Christian traditions. That is why the name of our Savior arouses such negative emotions among so-called traditional Jews. They have understood the name Yeshua or Jesus to mean something that He never was. They do not see Him as a completely Jewish person, but as a strange, even quite strange, tradition. As a result, we talk past each other. Even if we were all trained linguists, language is not the problem. These traditions are the problem.

In summary, we find a fitting verse in the Bible: „The next day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. After greeting them, he related one by one the things God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. When they heard this, they glorified God, but said to him, "When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: 'You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law." (Acts 21:20). Correctly formulated traditions served to enable many Jewish people to recognize Yeshua as their Messiah and elder brother, to experience forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and all that goes with it. Isn't that a reason to reflect? And perhaps to correct something?

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E-mail: info@kolhesed.com
Web: www.kolhesed.com
Phone: (773) 980-7163

Mail and donation Kol Hesed, P.O. Box 519, Mundelein, IL 60060 Zelle: info@kolhesed.com

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