

**WHAT IS MESSIAH?**  
**The Concept of Messiah and the Process of His Kingdom**  
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Founded In Truth Fellowship  
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Does the world need Jesus?

Of course the world needs Jesus. That's what we learned from our Christian upbringing. It's the testimony of scripture – especially the New Testament. Peter the apostle boldly proclaimed that truth when the Jewish authorities of his day put him and John on trial for healing a man in the Name of Jesus. We read that in Acts chapter 4:

Then Peter, filled with the *Ruach ha-Kodesh* [Holy Spirit], said to them, “Rulers and elders of the people! If we are on trial today for a *mitzvah* [act of kindness] done for a sick man, as to how this fellow was healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of *Yeshua ha-Mashiach ha-Natzrati* [Jesus Christ the Nazarene]—whom you had crucified, whom God raised from the dead—this one stands before you whole. This *Yeshua* is ‘the stone—rejected by you, the builders—that has become the chief cornerstone.’ There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved!”

Acts 4:8-12<sup>1</sup>

Remember that, only a few weeks earlier, Peter had run away in fear when *Yeshua* was arrested on the order of those same rulers and elders of Israel. Something dramatic happened to Peter to give him the boldness to proclaim such a message before those authorities. Otherwise, he would have kept running from Jerusalem all the way to Capernaum and gone back to fishing – and probably wondered for the rest of his life what that curious episode with Jesus was all about.

But remember also that Peter very much *wanted* to believe in Jesus. He wanted to believe *Yeshua* was Who He said He was, and that He would do all He said He would do. That's what we understand from a peculiar dialogue recorded in John's gospel. It happened the day after *Yeshua* miraculously fed a multitude with bread and fish:

So *Yeshua* said to them, “Amen, amen I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is real food and My blood is real drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent Me and I live because of the Father, so the one who eats of Me will also live because of Me. This is the bread that came down from heaven—not like the bread your fathers ate and then died. He who eats this bread will live forever.”

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise specified, scripture quotations are taken from the Tree of Life (TLV) Translation of the Bible. Copyright © 2015 by The Messianic Jewish Family Bible Society.

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He said these things while teaching at the synagogue in Capernaum. So when many of His disciples heard this, they said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can listen to it?"

But *Yeshua* knew His disciples were murmuring, so He said to them, "Does this offend you? Then what if you see the Son of Man going back up to the place where He was before? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is of no benefit. The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and are life! Yet some of you do not trust."

*Yeshua* knew from the beginning who were the ones who did not trust, as well as which one would betray Him. Then He told them, "For this reason I've told you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by the Father."

From this time, many of His disciples left and quit walking with Him. So *Yeshua* said to the Twelve, "You don't want to leave also, do you?"

Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life! We have trusted and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God."

John 6:53-69

Notice what *Yeshua* says: that the only people who can come to Him are the ones to whom the Father has granted access to the Son. In other words, revelation of the identity of Messiah is something that comes from our Heavenly Father. Matthew's gospel provides a second witness to this:

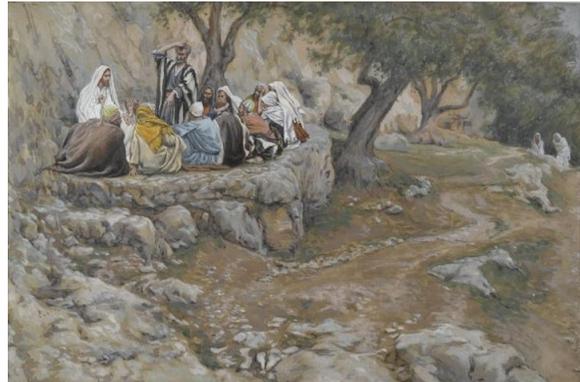
When *Yeshua* came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

They answered, "Some say John the Immerser, others say Elijah, and still others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets."

He said, "But who do you say I am?"

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

*Yeshua* said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven! And I also tell you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My community; and the gates of *Sheol* will not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will have been forbidden in heaven and what you permit on earth will have been permitted in heaven." Then He ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that He was the Messiah.



The Primacy of Saint Peter, James Tissot, 1886-96, [Brooklyn Museum](#).

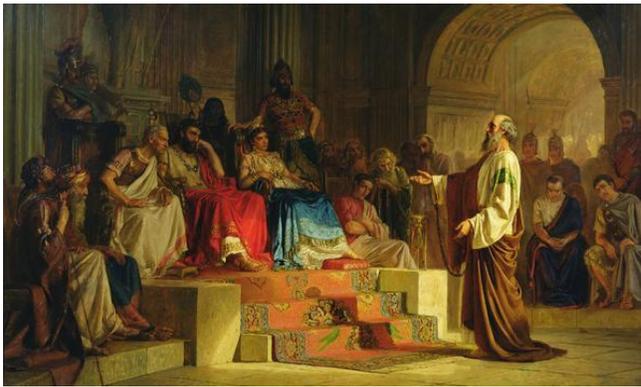
Matthew 16:13-20

What is more peculiar about this passage: that Peter proclaimed the revelation he had received that *Yeshua* is Messiah, or that *Yeshua* told His disciples not to tell anyone?

Meditate on that question while you are in a quiet place with God this week. This question addresses something we who have grown up in the Christian evangelical traditions often overlook. First of all, we miss the fact that only the Father in heaven

reveals the identity of the Messiah. That means no amount of persuasive argument or emotional appeal will succeed in getting someone to believe that Yeshua is the Messiah – or that Jesus is the Savior, as I learned it in Sunday School. It's God's business to do the revealing to the hearts He has prepared. It's our business to do the telling to those to whom He has sent us. If we wonder why people don't connect with the Gospel message, this may be why. It doesn't happen on our terms or in our preferred timing, but in the way and at the time that our Father deems best.

Peter was ready for that revelation, and therefore he believed, even when his fear overcame his faith and he ran away at Gethsemane. So what happened to make him the bold spokesman for Messiah's community in Jerusalem?



Trial of the Apostle Paul, *Nikolas Kornilievich Bodarevsky, 1875, Transcarpathian Regional Art Museum, via Wikimedia Commons.*

What else could it have been but the bodily resurrection of Yeshua? The acts of the apostles after Yeshua's death are the strongest evidence that Yeshua returned from the grave. Would they have defied Jewish and Roman authorities, suffered extreme persecution, and endured painful, humiliating deaths if they knew they were proclaiming a lie? On the other hand, if the One they believed to be Messiah and Savior of the world really had risen from the dead, if they had seen and touched Him, spoken with Him, and shared meals with Him, knowing that He

had been dead for three days, what could prevent them from telling the world that Yeshua conquered death? What greater confidence could they have received than the evidence of their own eyes and ears and minds and hearts that death was no longer an obstacle to their hope for eternity?

That living testimony of the first generation of Yeshua's disciples has been the Christian message for twenty centuries. It can't be quashed, silenced, negated, or cancelled because it's a testimony that has been repeated by the experience of every generation from then to now. Multitudes of Yeshua's disciples from every tribe and tongue and nation have gone to their deaths proclaiming His lordship and the salvation available in His Name. Those holy ones have called Him Yeshua, Iesu, Issa, and Jesus. It is the same name, pronounced differently in many languages, but still the one Name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.

That is my testimony. It's more than intellectual understanding of and agreement with the New Testament accounts; it's the story of my life. Even before I publicly proclaimed my faith in Jesus Christ at the age of 9, my God had been drawing me into relationship with Him. My praying grandparents and godly parents prepared the way for my entrance into the Kingdom long before I was born. In the lifetime since then, I have come to rely on Jesus as my counselor, comforter, confidant, provider, friend, and supreme authority. He is the reason I have a relationship with my Creator – a relationship that has grown deeper through many trials. I believe, not because of miracles, nor because of the testimony of

others, but because Jesus is a Living Presence in my being, just as my wife is a living presence in my life. I am incomplete without her, and I am incomplete without Jesus.

This is the kind of relationship that surpasses logic and objective reasoning. The simple fact is that I have professed to be a disciple of Jesus Christ for 50 years, but the reality of my relationship with my Messiah is far greater than anything detectable by our five senses. If you have such a relationship, I don't have to explain it to you. If you don't have such a relationship, I pray my testimony inspires you to inquire and see whether such a thing could be true.

That's where my relationship with the Creator stood about the time of my 40<sup>th</sup> birthday, and I would have been content had it continued that way. But as is the way with our Creator, He would not let matters rest. He challenged me to follow His lead into a new phase of our relationship that has taken me to unexpected places.

The first unexpected destination was the place where I had to ask God how Law and Grace fit together. I knew they were both from Him, and I knew that I was saved by Grace through faith. That was God's gift to me.<sup>2</sup> I knew as well that Jesus said He had come not to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it, and that not even the least part of the Law would pass away until heaven and earth passed away.<sup>3</sup> My Christian understanding said Jesus had fulfilled and done away with the Law of Moses, which meant it didn't apply to me. After all, the Mosaic Law was given specifically to Israel, and I had no connection to Israel, and certainly wasn't Jewish.

It would have been much easier to let the matter rest, but the Holy Spirit would not allow it. I had committed to follow His leading, and He was leading into this very strange place where it seemed that the Law was very much alive, and very much applied to me. In time, I realized through my investigation of Scripture and consultation with people who had studied these things that the Law was called the Torah, that the Torah was given through Moses to Israel, and that it applied to me because I had professed my allegiance to Israel's Messiah-King. By that time, I had learned that my King's Name in His native language is Yeshua, and that Yeshua means *salvation*.

This led to a further line of inquiry: I knew Jesus as my Savior, the Son of God, and the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world Who takes away the sins of the world.<sup>4</sup> This is something I knew, but apparently Israel did not know. I had that revelation, but the Jewish people did not. That's how I understood what Paul wrote in Romans 11:

For I do not want you, brothers and sisters, to be ignorant of this mystery—lest you be wise in your own eyes—that a partial hardening has come upon Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, “The Deliverer shall come out of Zion. He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.”

Romans 11:25-27

This passage is the reason Christians pray that the eyes of the Jewish people be opened to their Messiah. Translated, that means, “We believe the Jews have no idea

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<sup>2</sup> Ephesians 2:8-9

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 5:17-21

<sup>4</sup> Luke 2:10-11, 1 John 5:20, Revelation 13:8, John 1:29

what they've been waiting for all these centuries, so we pray that you break through their ignorance and reveal Jesus to them so they can become Christians like us and be released from the bondage of the Law."

That's what I understood for much of my life. As with the question of Law and Grace, it would have been much easier to let the matter rest, but the Holy Spirit wouldn't let me. That's because He had already convinced me of my connection to Israel. That gets to the next question I prayerfully asked: what does it mean to be a New Covenant believer?

Did you know that the New Covenant is the longest passage from the Old Testament quoted in the New Testament? Here's how it's written in the book of Hebrews:

For finding fault with them [Israel], He says, "Behold, days are coming, says *ADONAI*, when I will inaugurate a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not remain in My covenant, and I did not care for them, says *ADONAI*. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says *ADONAI*. I will put My *Torah* into their mind, and upon their hearts I will write it. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And no more will they teach, each one his fellow citizen and each one his brother, saying, 'Know *ADONAI*,' because all will know Me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and their sins I will remember no more."

Hebrews 8:8-12

That's a direct quote from Jeremiah 31:31-34, a chapter that goes on to say:

Thus says *ADONAI*, who gives the sun as a light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars as a light by night, who stirs up the sea so its waves roar, *ADONAI-Tzva'ot* [the LORD of Hosts] is His Name: "Only if this fixed order departs from before Me"—it is a declaration of *ADONAI*—"then also might Israel's offspring cease from being a nation before Me—for all time."

Thus says *ADONAI*: "Only if heaven above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, then also I will cast off the offspring of Israel—for all they have done."

It is a declaration of *ADONAI*.

Jeremiah 31:34-36 (35-37)

These words of Jeremiah knocked my paradigms off their foundation. For the first time, I realized that God had committed Himself to preserving His chosen nation of Israel for all time and working through them to bring redemption to the entire earth. That's why the New Covenant initiated by the Blood of Jesus<sup>5</sup> was a covenant the Almighty renewed with His chosen nation of Israel. By pledging allegiance to Israel's Messiah-King, I had pledged my obedience to this same Covenant. Since it was made with Israel, that meant somehow, I had become part of Israel, or at least had become intimately associated with Israel. But how could that be since I am not Jewish? After all, Israel is the Jewish people, right?

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<sup>5</sup> Luke 22:20

Yes, the Jewish people are the visible remnant of the nation of Israel. Their continued existence as a people and a nation is the greatest testimony that there is a God Who is willing and able to come through with His promises. That's the beginning of the miracle of Israel.

This is where we arrive at what is called the Two House message. It's right there in the New Covenant: the Covenant God makes with the House of Israel and the House of Judah. I can't say I understand it completely, nor do I believe anyone understands it completely, but it does seem that there are two parts of Israel in this New Covenant.

The House of Judah is the Jewish people. Their very name comes from the tribe and kingdom of Judah, the lineage of King David and Yeshua, the Son of David, Israel's Messiah. The other House, the House of Israel, is the non-Jewish part of the nation. After the death of David's son Solomon, Israel divided into these two parts when ten tribes rebelled and set up their own rival Kingdom of Israel. Those who stayed loyal to David's dynasty established the Kingdom of Judah.<sup>6</sup> Eventually, the Kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the Assyrian Empire and the Ten Tribes were scattered into the whole world. About 150 years later, the Babylonian Empire destroyed Judah and sent the Jewish people into exile.

The exile of the Jewish nation ended 70 years after that, but the exile of the House of Israel never ended. God has promised to bring them back, though, as the apostles understood. That's why James, the brother of Yeshua, referred to a prophecy of Israel's restoration when the Council of Jerusalem was debating what to do with the Gentiles who had come to believe in Yeshua as Messiah. He quotes from Amos 9, a passage about the restoration of the House of Israel, to justify his recommendation:

Then the whole group became silent and were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were describing in detail all the signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. After they finished speaking, Jacob [James] answered, "Brothers, listen to me. Simon has described how God first showed His concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for His Name. The words of the Prophets agree, as it is written:

'After this I will return and rebuild the fallen tabernacle of David. I will rebuild its ruins and I will restore it, so that the rest of humanity may seek the Lord—namely all the Gentiles who are called by My name—says *ADONAI*, who makes these things known from of old.'

Therefore, I judge not to trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God—but to write to them to abstain from the contamination of idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what is strangled, and from blood. For Moses from ancient generations has had in every city those who proclaim him, since he is read in all the synagogues every *Shabbat*."

Acts 15:12-21

I take this passage to mean James and the other apostles and elders saw the Gentiles coming to faith in Christ as fulfillment of a Messianic prophecy. Their last question to Yeshua before His ascension to the Father was, "Lord, are You restoring the kingdom to

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<sup>6</sup> 1 Kings 12:1-25

Israel at this time?"<sup>7</sup> They expected a political restoration, but when they saw all those non-Jews obviously experiencing a genuine relationship with the Almighty, they realized that the restoration was much greater than that.

Somehow, God had brought these non-Jewish, non-Israelite people into the Covenant Kingdom. They weren't Jews and would never be Jews, but they needed to learn what the Jews knew about the God Who had called and redeemed them. Whether they were Israelites by genealogy or DNA or any other proof of lineage didn't matter, then or now. God somehow had created a people out of individuals who had never been a people, and had given them a place in the holy kingdom of priests with which He had established His covenant of redemption for the earth. That's why Paul writes in Romans 11 about us Gentiles being grafted into the cultivated olive tree of Israel.

At some point in this process, I began to understand that Paul's reference to a partial blindness or hardening of Israel referred to something more than the apparent blindness of the Jewish people to the identity of their Messiah. Israel suffers from a double blindness. Yes, the Jewish people don't embrace Jesus, for reasons that are more complicated than most Christians understand, but we non-Jewish followers of Israel's Messiah don't see our identity, and are blind to our responsibilities as citizens of Messiah's Kingdom. In fact, we don't know very much about our Messiah, other than that He has saved us from our sins and guaranteed us a place in the Kingdom of Heaven. If we're going to enter fully into our calling as disciples of Messiah Yeshua, we need to know more about what Messiah is supposed to do, and how to live in His Kingdom.

This is where I find help from my Israeli friends. When I say, "Israeli friends," I usually mean my Orthodox Jewish friends, most of whom are American-born, and none of whom proclaim Yeshua of Nazareth as the Messiah. One of my friends once said he hoped Yeshua would be the Messiah, but so far Yeshua hasn't fulfilled all the messianic prophecies, and until He does, He isn't the Messiah. That same friend said he doesn't understand what people mean when they say he should accept Jesus as his personal savior. For what reason? So he can keep Torah and walk out the righteousness he has learned through his relationship with the Almighty? How is that different from what he's doing already?

My Israeli friend has a point. We from the nations don't have a good understanding of God's righteous ways, but observant Jews do. They learn it from their infancy, and not necessarily out of legalistic tradition. They are walking out a personal and communal connection to the Almighty that extends back to Abraham. In fact, their way of life is probably much closer to Yeshua's way than ours. He was, after all, an observant Jew who met all the requirements to worship in the Temple in Jerusalem.



Jesus Unrolls the Book in the Synagogue, James Tissot, 1886-94, [Brooklyn Museum](https://www.brooklynmuseum.org).

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<sup>7</sup> Acts 1:6

Are my Israeli friends “saved”? That’s a question I think it best to set aside for the moment. One reason I suggest that is because we do not yet have full revelation of how God’s Kingdom works. We are right to say that there is no other Name under heaven by which people are saved, but is there a way to call on that Name other than our received formula of accepting Jesus as our Savior? Joel says, “And it will come about *that* everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved,” a statement quoted by Peter and Paul.<sup>8</sup> Is there a way to call on the Name of the LORD other than the usual Christian way?

Another reason I suggest we set aside this question for now is that we can’t see into another person’s heart and detect their thoughts. A person can come to the conclusion that Yeshua is Messiah, but not be in a position to proclaim that publicly. Thus, it is a matter between them and God – as it always has been, for all of us.

That gets to another reason for my suggestion: ultimately the only One Who decides who gets into His Kingdom is the King. The way we Christians have entered is the way we have learned from the Scriptures, and practiced through our various Christian traditions. Have we entered in a way that pleases our King? That’s a matter of faith, demonstrated by the way we live. That’s the point behind Yeshua’s statement that we would know who people are by the fruits of their lives.<sup>9</sup>

My Israeli friends produce good fruit with their lives. Some have been what we call Orthodox from their childhood, having been born into families who practice their Jewish faith by living out the precepts of Torah passed down through the generations. Others became Orthodox later in life. They have testimonies similar to what we hear of wayward youths who came to faith in Christ after years of godless living. The difference for these friends was the call to the Land of Israel. Once in the Promised Land, they realized it was more than home; it was the place where they could meet God and embark on a journey with Him and toward Him.



*Adam Eliyahu Berkowitz,  
Senior Reporter for  
[Israel365 News](https://www.israel365news.com/).*

That’s the testimony of my Israeli friend Eliyahu Berkowitz. He’s a writer for Israel365News, an organization that, “offers a fresh and Biblical perspective on the latest news from Israel and the Middle East.”<sup>10</sup> Like all my Israeli friends, he knows more about the Bible than many Christians ever learn. The Tanakh, or Old Testament, that is; he’s only now starting to read through the New Testament.

In one of our first conversations, Eliyahu surprised me by saying in Judaism the Messiah isn’t necessarily a person, but is more of a concept that just happens. For much of my life, I would have taken offense at that statement, but by the time of our conversation I wanted to understand my friend’s perspective. He meant no offense. In fact, he was talking to me because he wanted to understand my perspective. He and his colleagues are aware of the growing interest in Israel among Evangelical Christians, and of what I call the Torah Awakening among Christians that has inspired

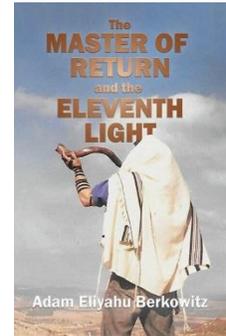
<sup>8</sup> Joel 2:32, Acts 2:21, Romans 10:13

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 7:15-20, Luke 6:39-45, James 3:13-18

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.israel365news.com/>

many of us to begin keeping Shabbat and the Feasts, to follow the dietary laws, and do other things that only Jews do. They want to know why.

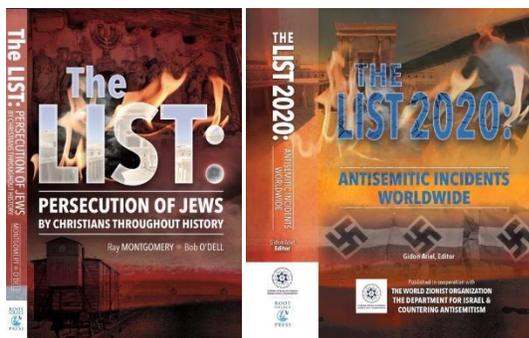
If you want to know why this is important to my Israeli friends, read Eliyahu's latest novel, [\*The Master of Return and the Eleventh Light\*](#). It's an autobiographical novel about his life in a Jewish settlement in what the world calls the West Bank, but what we know as the biblical heartland of Judea and Samaria. I know many of the people who appear as characters in the book, and I recognize many of the stories he tells – such as the story of how his wife miraculously survived a terror attack. She was seven months pregnant when a knife-wielding Arab attacked her at a bus stop. Eliyahu will be the first to tell you it was the hand of God that kept her and the baby from serious injury.



That's not the only deadly trauma Eliyahu and his family have witnessed. Once, as we were driving into the Jordan Valley, he showed me a military checkpoint where a friend of his had been shot to death while she stood guard. Now he lives in the Golan, just a few miles from the Syrian border. His home is peaceful and pleasant, but not far away is a land that has known anything but peace for more than a decade, and from which death could rain down at any moment.

About his home – that's another reason I know my Israeli friend is serious about understanding us Christians. Do you remember the tremendous resistance Peter had to overcome when God called him to go into the home of Cornelius, the Roman centurion? That kind of resistance still exists among observant Jews. Contact with Gentiles is carefully managed, and not simply because they want to avoid contamination from unclean food or other questionable sources.

In the twenty centuries since Yeshua, the Jewish Messiah, walked the earth, the church that bears His Name has been less than hospitable to the Jewish people. Our consistent message has been that they are cursed by God for having killed the Messiah, and therefore are cut out of His covenant. The church has replaced the Jews and has become the new Israel, and the only hope for the Jews is to convert. If they won't convert, then they must leave, or die.



That line of thinking has led to one unspeakable atrocity after another. My friends Bob O'Dell and Ray Montgomery document this in their book, [\*The LIST: Persecution of Jews by Christians Throughout History\*](#). Another of my Israeli friends, Gidon Ariel, published *The LIST*, and recently edited a new volume called [\*The LIST 2020: Antisemitic Incidents Worldwide\*](#). The purpose of these books is to help Christians understand what has been done to the Jewish

people in the name of Jesus Christ, or by those who profess to be Christians. It's a history we need to know, and do something to correct.

Did you realize, for example, that Jewish mothers and fathers were known to kill their own children rather than allow them to be forcibly baptized? That happened more than

once, during the Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition, and other times in centuries past when Jews were given the choice of conversion or death. Those Jewish parents believed that the Christians were taking their children to worship false gods, and thus take them out of covenant with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. What else were they to believe when they saw the church of the day replacing the Sabbath with Sunday, compelling converted Jews to prove their sincerity by eating what God had forbidden in Torah, and kneeling to statues of Jesus, Mary, and other saints? It's no surprise that Maimonides – the Rambam, Rabbi Moses ben Maimon – concluded that Christians were idolators. The Rambam was the personal physician to Sultan Saladin, the warrior who defeated King Richard the Lionheart of England in the Third Crusade. The Christianity he observed was the same Roman Christianity that repulsed the Reformers of later centuries. They, like the Rambam, would condemn the Roman Catholic Church as idolatrous, corrupt, and in error.

But the Reformers, like Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and Knox, condemned the Church in order to bring it back into alignment with the Word of God. That's why Protestant churches reject much of the Catholic tradition, even though they retain the Replacement Theology that claimed Jews were no longer in favor with God. Thus, the Jewish people continue to have that same suspicion and fear of Christians that their Medieval ancestors had. They are always waiting for the other shoe to drop, as it did during the Holocaust, when Christian friends, neighbors, and business partners suddenly became their persecutors.

That changed in 1948, when the remnant of the Jewish people returned to the Holy Land and reestablished the nation of Israel. That itself is a miracle of the highest order. It caused many Christians to reassess their understanding that the church had replaced Israel. Another great miracle happened in 1967, when Israel regained control of all of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. Suddenly, it seemed that the End Times had arrived, and that Jesus would soon be back to establish His Kingdom.

Or, to view it from the Jewish perspective, that Messiah would come and Israel would be restored to its place of prominence among the nations – not to be lord over the Gentiles, but to lead the nations into the Messianic Age of universal peace and worship of the Almighty. That is the purpose of Israel, and the reason Israel has an anointed King to rule in the Spirit and power of God. That's why my Israeli friends who take the Scripture seriously do all they can to walk out the ancient prophecies and prepare the way for Messiah. Messiah means King, and a King must have a kingdom to rule. In the absence of the King, His people have the responsibility to make themselves ready to receive Him. That means living righteous lives according to what the God of Israel has taught and commanded through Moses and the prophets. And, I might add, through the Jewish rabbi we Christians acknowledge as Messiah, and His Jewish apostles.

My Israeli friends have helped me learn more about the Kingdom this Messiah-King will rule over. In Christian language, that would be the Millennium, when Christ rules for a thousand years. Perhaps a better name for it is the Messianic Age. Whether it lasts a thousand years exactly doesn't matter as much as whether we will be ready to live through it as the people our God desires. We've been expecting it to come upon us suddenly. I agree that Messiah will appear suddenly and catch us all by surprise, but thanks to my Israeli friends, I see that there's a process to the advent of this Kingdom that involves all who are willing to work toward it. That, I think, is what Eliyahu meant when he said

Messiah is more of a concept that just happens. Ideally it happens with our willing involvement. In that sense, I surmise this concept and process of Messiah echoes in Paul's exhortation to "work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). Yes, the Messianic Age will happen whether we get involved or not, but I think it's better to walk out the promises of Scripture in faith, even though they seem impossible and crazy.

It's the crazy believers who have changed the world, not the normal people who are content with the status quo. Those crazy Jewish Zionists are the ones who, with God's help and at His urging, reestablished the nation of Israel in 1948. Maybe God is now looking for a few crazy Christian and Jewish laborers to create the conditions for the Messianic Age.

That is the age when, as Zechariah says, "In those days it will come to pass that ten men from every language of the nations will grasp the corner of the garment of a Jew saying, 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'" (Zechariah 8:23). It's the age when the nations bring Israel home, as Isaiah says:

Nations will come to your light, kings to the brilliance of your rising. Lift up your eyes and look all around: they all gather—they come to you—your sons will come from far away, your daughters carried on the hip. Then you will see and be radiant, and your heart will throb and swell with joy. For the abundance of the sea will be turned over to you. The wealth of nations will come to you.

Isaiah 60:3-5

The Messianic Age is when the Land of Israel is restored, as Jeremiah says:

Again I will build you, so you will be rebuilt, virgin Israel! Again you will take up your tambourines as ornaments, and go out to dances of merrymakers. Again you will plant vineyards on the hills of Samaria—planters will plant and use them.

Jeremiah 31:3-4(4-5)

And it's when the divided halves of Israel are at last reconciled, as Isaiah says:

He will lift up a banner for the nations, and assemble the dispersed of Israel, and gather the scattered of Judah from the four corners of the earth. Ephraim's [Israel's] envy will end, those hostile to Judah will be cut off. Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah, and Judah will not harass Ephraim.

Isaiah 11:12-13

I remember these and other prophecies of the Messianic Kingdom when I see what my Jewish and Christian friends are doing to walk them out. The prophecies are being fulfilled right now. Those who see this can say, "This is that!"

- This is that when the [Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary](https://en.kanaan.org/), founded in Germany in 1947, brings reconciliation and restoration of our relationship as Christians with God's covenant people of Israel.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> <https://en.kanaan.org/>

- This is that when German pastors establish the [March of Life movement](#) to honor Holocaust survivors, work toward reconciliation with Jewish people, and take a stand for Israel against modern antisemitism.<sup>12</sup>
- This is that when the [Altar of Prayer](#) raises up Christian intercession for Israel from around the world 24 hours a day, seven days a week.<sup>13</sup>
- This is that when the [Nations' 9<sup>th</sup> of Av](#) works to educate Christians about our horrendous history with the Jewish people, and joins with Jews on the day they fast and mourn the loss of the Holy Temples, Jerusalem, the Land of Israel, and the direct connection with Israel's God.<sup>14</sup>
- This is that when the [Aliyah Return Center](#) coordinates help from Christians to bring Jews back to Israel and get settled in the Promised Land.<sup>15</sup>
- This is that when [HaYovel](#) brings Christians to Israel to work in Jewish vineyards.<sup>16</sup>
- This is that when the [Greening Israel](#) project mobilizes Christians around the world to plant trees and restore the forests of Judea and Samaria.<sup>17</sup>
- This is that when [Blessed Buy Israel](#), a Christian company, creates a global market for Jewish-made products from Judea and Samaria.<sup>18</sup>

My Israeli friends and I don't talk about our difference of opinion on whether Messiah is God, or a man sent from God. I know what I believe, and I know we are all pinning our hopes on the same promises. What I've learned from Scripture and my Israeli friends, though, is that those promises apply to us all as the Covenant people of the Living God. We from the Christian side have emphasized the personal salvation offered by and through Jesus, but we don't understand that other part which my Jewish friends seem to walk out instinctively. Eliyahu talked about that in a recent conversation.

Remember what Peter said in Acts 4? He said, "Yeshua is 'the stone—rejected by you, the builders—that has become the chief cornerstone.'" Eliyahu quoted that verse to me. Not the verse in Acts, but the verse from Psalms that Peter quoted:

The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone.

Psalm 118:22

Eliyahu wasn't referring to Jesus when he quoted this verse; he was referring to us, the peculiar collection of Jews and Christians who had come together in mutual respect to walk toward the promises of our God together. We don't agree on everything, but we know our destinies are bound together, and that we need each other to fulfill our Kingdom calling. We don't fit in very well in the mainstream Jewish or Christian worlds. That's

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<sup>12</sup> <https://marchofremembrance.org/>; <https://marchoflife.org/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.altarofprayer.com/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://9-av.com/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://aliyahreturncenter.com/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://serveisrael.com/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://greeningisrael.com/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://blessedbuyisrael.com/>

because most Christians still regard Jews as outside the counsels of God, and as targets of conversion, and most Jews regard Christians as threats to their very existence. But a cornerstone, or capstone, or keystone, as Eliyahu translates it, doesn't fit in the normal places; it exists to hold the "normal" stones in place and complete the structure. That's what Messiah does for the Kingdom, and that's what His Kingdom does for the world.

As my Israeli friend continues his reading of the New Testament, he may be surprised to find another reference to that cornerstone in Peter's first epistle:

As you come to Him, a living stone rejected by men but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house—a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Messiah *Yeshua*.

1 Peter 2:4-5

This is where our different understandings come together in a way that makes sense. It's Messiah Who holds us in place, and we who hold the world in place. It's a supreme act of faith, because everything in our backgrounds and everyone we encounter says we cannot and should not associate as brethren. Yet that's what we must do if this Kingdom is to be ready to welcome its King.

I began this message by asking, "Does the world need Jesus?" Yes, the world needs Jesus, but I think the better way to ask is, "Does the world need Messiah?" That's how my Israeli friends can be part of my answer, and how I can be part of theirs.



[\*Jew and Gentile, Nations' 9th of Av, 2021.\*](#)