

DEVARIM CHAIM

(WORDS OF LIFE)

A publication of *Kehillah B'nei Abraham*

From the Editor

Dr. Dee/Tiffany Dennis

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Kehillah B'nei Abraham (KBA) is translated as **Congregation of the Children of Abraham** where Jewish and Gentile Believers

live out their faith in the G-D of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and His Messiah Yeshua.

We worship and learn together from all the richness of G-D's Living Word (Genesis through Revelation); especially the revelation of G-D's Holy Son, Messiah Yeshua. We do this in the culture of Judaism (which is the culture our Messiah lived during His time on earth--His first coming) in order to better understand His teachings to live out His instructions in our daily lives.

Open Arms for Visitors: Visitors are always a cherished part of our community! We extend a warm invitation to you, your friends, and your family to join us for any of our services. Our *Shabbat Shacharit* services are **live streamed** right from our website www.kba.life.

KBA Website: We have a plethora of resources (under the **RESOURCE** tab), plus, our services are now archived. Feel free to peruse our website. If you have questions, please let us know.

SERVICES: Our weekly *Shabbat* services are held in person at World Life Church, 495 S. Perry Street, Lawrenceville, Georgia 30046, and also live streamed each Saturday at 11:00 a.m. Visit us at www.kba.life for more information.

Meet Ezekiel Stephenson



Congratulations to Dennis and Rachel Stephenson on the birth of their son Ezekiel. Ezekiel weighed in at 8 lbs. 02 oz. We are really looking forward to meeting him. Congratulations and many blessings!



What is Messianic Judaism? ✡
Taken from KBA Website

Messianic Judaism is a modern term for the original faith of the First Century disciples that began strictly within the confines of First Century Judaism in approximately AD 30-33. The term *Messianic* comes from the Hebrew word *Mashiach*, which translated into the English word *Messiah*. It means *Anointed One*, so a Messianic believer is someone who has become a follower of the Messiah. Messianic Judaism is rooted in Biblical Judaism (as opposed to Rabbinic Judaism, which developed after the destruction of the Temple in AD 70) and reflects our belief that Yeshua, having fulfilled the prophecies of the Tanakh, was indeed the promised Messiah of Israel.

All of the first believers in Yeshua were Jewish—not some, but all. Yeshua Himself taught that He had come only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. It was only after His death and resurrection, just prior to His ascension, that He instructed His disciples to go into the nations and proclaim the redemption that was available in Him.

Messianic believers were referred to by different names in the early days, including The Way and the Nazarenes. They were never considered to be part of a separate religion, but instead a sect within Judaism. That continued even after Gentiles began coming to faith in great numbers, beginning in Acts Chapter 10. Soon the number of Gentile believers surpassed the number of Jewish believers; however, the Movement continued to be led primarily by Jewish believers throughout the First Century.

Messianic Judaism differs from Christianity in that it is rooted in Judaism. Messianic Jews do not separate from their Jewish roots when they accept Yeshua as Messiah, but instead maintain their Jewish identity. Whereas Christians often do not conduct their lives in accordance with the Torah (the first five books of the Bible), Messianic Jews continue to do so, observing the

seventh-day Sabbath, celebrating the feasts established by G-D, and adhering to the dietary restrictions as commanded by Adonai in the Torah. Messianic Jews understand that salvation is by faith in Messiah only and that ritual observance to commandments do not lead to salvation, but believe that adherence to G-D's commands should be the natural byproduct of faith. In other words, we strive to keep the commandments not as a way to gain salvation, but because we are saved.



We also believe each person should remain in the condition he or she was when called, as taught by Rav Sha'ul (the Apostle Paul) in 1 Cor. 7:17-20:

17 Only let

each person live the life the L-RD has assigned him and live it in the condition he was in when G-D called him. This is the rule I lay down in all the congregations.

18 Was someone already circumcised when he was called? Then he should not try to remove the marks of his circumcision. Was someone uncircumcised when he was called? He shouldn't undergo b'rit-milah.

19 Being circumcised means nothing, and being uncircumcised means nothing; what does mean something is keeping G-D's commandments.

20 Each person should remain in the condition he was in when he was called. (CJB)

Simply put, Jews are to remain Jews, and Gentiles are to remain Gentiles. Gentiles were never instructed in the Bible to become Jewish, and neither were Jews instructed to renounce Judaism.

Despite the belief by many that Paul did just that, when Scripture is read in its proper context, we see that he did just the opposite. After his encounter with Yeshua on the road to

Damascus, Paul continued to live according to Jewish traditions and customs, even taking a Nazirite vow, proclaiming in the present tense that “I am a Pharisee” (not “used to be a Pharisee”), and upholding the Torah. And he was not alone. Acts 21:20 (which occurred around 55 CE) tells us that tens of thousands of Jews came to faith in Yeshua and continued to be faithful to the Torah of Moses. Some historians believe that number may have been well over one million. Regardless of the exact number, it was substantial, and the book of Acts tells us that Pharisees and many priests were part of the early Messianic Movement.

In the early days, believers (both Jewish and non-Jewish) worshipped alongside non-believing Jews in their synagogues and continued to be part of daily Jewish life for a number of years. But that began to change when Israel went to war with Rome in AD 66. It is beyond the scope of this writing to detail everything that happened, but ultimately, the Jewish believers found themselves rejected by their Jewish brethren who did not accept Yeshua, and the persecution they faced from their Jewish brethren eventually resulted in the believing Gentile community separating themselves from the Jewish believers.

By the end of the Fourth Century, although there were still Jewish believers, the Messianic Movement itself had disappeared from the pages of history and Jewish believers more or less assimilated into the church from that point until modern times.

Then, in the 1800s CE, that began to change when a group of Jewish believers founded the first modern Messianic congregation in Kishinev, Moldova, called “Israelites of the New Covenant”. There, Jewish believers could

worship Yeshua and freely maintain the practices of their Jewish heritage.

The movement began to grow and expand around the world, giving Jewish believers an opportunity to practice their faith as followers of the Jewish Messiah while still identifying as “Hebrews.” Hebrew Christian Alliances were formed, which opened the way for what we know today as Messianic Judaism.

Then, in 1967, the true rebirth of Messianic Judaism occurred. Israel was victorious in the Six Day War and regained control of Jerusalem. For the first time in 1900 years, Jewish people were allowed to worship G-D freely at their holiest site. Many miracles were reported from the battlefield. A global spiritual revival among the Jewish people began, with hundreds of thousands professing faith in Yeshua as their Messiah, and new congregations where they could maintain a Jewish lifestyle while also following Yeshua were founded.

Here in the U.S., during the Jesus Movement of the late 1960s young people—especially hippies and drug users—were becoming believers and really on fire for our Savior. At the same time, there was also a revival among the Jewish young people who wanted to reclaim their Jewish heritage and expression after coming to faith in their Messiah. Those Jewish young people led the transformation of the Movement from what was basically a church with a sprinkling of Judaism mixed in, into what is a Movement that is steeped in Judaism, transforming the music from church hymns to Messianic music borrowing heavily from both Jewish and modern tunes as well as lyrics straight from Scripture, and also incorporating dance into their worship services. Revival also broke out in Israel in 1967 (indeed, throughout the globe) following the Six-Day War. Many of the approximately 1,000,000 young people who had come to faith during the Jesus Movement here in the U.S. were Jewish, and many began to immigrate to Israel in the 1970s, giving the Body of Messiah in the Land a

much-needed boost in both numbers and energy.

By 1989, the estimated number of believers in Israel had reached 1,200 (up from 23 at its founding in 1948), with at least 30 Messianic congregations. By 1999, there were 81 Messianic congregations, and an estimated 5,000 believers. In 2017, 300 congregations were counted. It has become increasingly difficult to accurately identify the number of Jewish believers in Israel, but a conservative estimate in 2017 was 30,000. And the Movement continues to spread. In fact, it is estimated that there are now at least 870,000 Jewish believers in Yeshua worldwide. Some scholars believe that the number is too low because there are a considerable number of Jewish people who believe Yeshua is the Messiah, but are afraid to admit it publicly for fear of being rejected by family and society; therefore, the true number may be much higher.

Just as the Messianic Movement began with a small group of Jewish people in the First Century, and then expanded to include multitudes from the nations, the modern Messianic Movement was started by a relatively small group of people so that Jewish believers could express their worship within Judaism, and a multitude from the nations has once again been drawn into the Movement.

Opportunities to Assist Others 🙏

Ministry to those in need is very important to our Heavenly Father and Messiah Yeshua, and we have two opportunities for those who would like to participate.

First, as Rabbi Rene announced, we have been looking into organizations that are assisting those who have been devastated in the flood-ravaged areas of Texas, and have decided to support Samaritan's Purse. If you would like to help with a financial donation, please do so directly at this link:

https://www.samaritanspurse.org/article/deadly-flooding-hits-central-texas/?utm_source=Bing&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=m_YYTF-B25V&utm_content=texas-flood-lp&msclkid=66a6d0889e071adad9feb8fd383a57fb&utm_term=samaritan%27s%20purse.

Second opportunity: Bishop Bell once again invited us to partner with World Life Church to provide backpacks and school supplies to those in the Lawrenceville area who need assistance. Once again, KBA stepped up and did a tremendous job collecting supplies. Thank you to everyone who contributed. Your gifts will truly make a difference to students in need as they return to class next week. Distribution of the supplies will be on Friday, August 1, as school begins Monday, August 4.

Blessings to you, and thank you for assisting those who need help. *Cheryl*

SCRIPTURES FOR THE MONTH 📖

Be at peace among yourselves. We exhort you, brothers: Admonish the disorderly; encourage the faint-hearted; support the weak; be patient toward all. See that no one returns evil for evil to anyone, but always follow after that which is good for one another and for all. Always rejoice. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of G-D in Christ Jesus toward you. Don't quench the Spirit. Don't despise prophecies. Test all things, and hold firmly that which is good. Abstain from every form of evil. 23:31a) | 1 Thes 5:13-21

Consider the following questions as it relates to this month's Scriptures and the personal application.

1. What are some practical ways we can cultivate a "spirit of Joy" irrespective of our circumstances?
2. What are some ways to cultivate an attitude of gratitude, even when facing difficult situations, and how does thankfulness impact our perspective?



August 2 - *Shabbat Chazon*

August 3 *Tisha B'Av*

August 4 - School begins for Gwinnett County

August 9 *Shabbat Nachamu*

Please see the information below for more details about the special *Shabbatot* above.

Special Shabbatot

Even though we are in the middle of summer and still a couple of months away from the fall High Holy Day/Festival season, we are already beginning the initial steps of preparation for our meeting with the Creator of the world. Over the next few weeks we will see how rebellion leads to destruction, but when we repent and turn back to Adonai, He forgives and restores us.

The first Shabbat of August (August 2nd) is ***Shabbat Chazon***. This is the Shabbat immediately before Tisha B'Av and is known as both the Shabbat of foretelling and the Shabbat of the Prophecy/Vision. That's because our haftarah reading comes from the prophecy of Isaiah 1:1-27, in which the Prophet prophesies the rebellion of the children of Israel and how He will restore them.

Tisha B'Av, which falls on August 3rd this year, is a day of fasting within the Jewish community because of all the calamities that occurred on that day. For example, in ancient times 10 of the 12 spies sent by Moses to observe the land of Canaan came back with a bad report, causing the people to refuse to go forth and take the

land as commanded by Adonai. Consequently, He punished them by having them wander in the desert for 40 years until all of the generation over 20 years of age when they left Egypt, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua, had passed. Both the first and second Temples were destroyed on this day; the former by the Babylonians in 587 BC, and the latter by the Romans in AD 70. Even the Bar Kokhba revolt and destruction of the city of Betar by the Romans in AD 132, and the subsequent plowing of the site of the Temple and surrounding area, all occurred on the 9th of Av. But it didn't stop there. There are also other calamities that have occurred on this date in modern times. Tisha B'Av is a time for us to fast and pray for the Jewish people, that they would turn their hearts back to Adonai and see the truth of Messiah Yeshua.

Shabbat Nachamu (also known as the Sabbath of Consolation) is the Shabbat following the fast of Tisha B'Av. This year, Shabbat Nachamu falls on August 9th. It gets its name from the passage in our haftarah reading (Isaiah 40:1-26) that begins: "Nachamu, nachamu ami—Comfort, comfort my people..." It is a message of consolation from the prophet Isaiah, the first in a series of readings from the Prophet during what is commonly referred to as the "Seven Weeks of Consolation"—the seven weeks between Tisha B'Av and Rosh Hashanah. Those readings are:

1. Nachamu Nachamu (Isaiah 40:1-26)
2. Vatomer Tziyon (Isaiah 49:14-51:3)
3. Aniyah So'arah (Isaiah 54:11-55:5)
4. Anoch Anochi (Isaiah 51:12-52:12)
5. Rani Akarah (Isaiah 54:1-10)
6. Kumi Ori (Isaiah 60:1-22)
7. Sos Asis (Isaiah 61:10-63:9)

Join us to learn more about these special *Shabbatot* at our services on August 2nd and 9th either in person or online at www.kba.life.

PRAYER WITH THE RABBI 🙏



Yeshua warned His disciples to *watch and pray* lest you enter into temptation.
Matthew 26:41

At 10AM each Saturday morning before *Shabbat Shacharit*, Rabbi Rene invites all men for a time of prayer. The prayer group meets in his regular Torah Club classroom located downstairs.



Submitted by: Joan Knauer

Today's writing is not one of my own. It is a Word from HaShem given to Oren Ferber from a Messianic Congregation in Tel Aviv. Oren received it in August 2023. He had never heard from the L-RD in this way and so presented it to the Leadership. It was approved and he presented it to the Congregation September 22, 2023, just before Yom Kippur and eight days before that fateful day, October 7, 2023. As you read it, perhaps a few times, listen carefully to what HaShem is saying and listen to His heart.

"The Jews revere Me. The Jews honor Me and they demonstrate this through observance of the laws that, according to their understanding,

I have given. They hold Me dear but they do not truly know Me. They lack a relationship with Me. Therefore, they cannot truly love Me. Judaism secures their connection to Me, but it also prevents them from drawing near and truly knowing Me. And so they wander and drift through many generations and dusty paths. Like their forefathers in the desert, they cannot enter the Promised Land. Just as they couldn't bear Moses in his glory, so even when I came among them they could not bear Me. Yet, I've come to bear them and to serve them. They are My people. They are the Apple of My Eye, and I will never forsake them. For I am faithful. I've gathered them to the Promised Land to prove My faithfulness and to fulfill My redemption plan for them.

Now they realize that without Me there is nothing that can truly unify them. What held them together in the past was hope from within and external challenges. Their love for Me is imprisoned in the shell of religion. The day is coming and this shell will crack, and they will realize that it is no longer needed. Its role was to protect their identity, but I shall give them a better identity. The shell will crack with great pain and trials that My people have not known before. If there was a way to prevent this pain, it would have been prevented. I partake in the suffering of My people. How I wanted to gather them under My wings, but they refused. The shell will crack with great pain and trials that My people have not known before."

A Strong Call for Prayer for Israel

Pray for them always. Pray for your people so that their ears will open; their eyes may open; and their hearts. And that they will see Me, the one whom they pierced. (Zech. 12). Pray for My people. Pray that their hearts will open to Me in praise and repentance. For there is no praise without repentance preceding it. Make them jealous by your love for Me. Only when they see My true lovers their heart shall open, and

some by My grace might feel it. This is how the seed was sown in My servant's soul (referring to the story of Steven) when he (Shaul) watched him suffering, yes, and still loving the people who persecuted him, who were actually stoning him at that point. Pray for them always. The one who loves My people loves Me, and is faithful to Me. The one who knows Me will obey My commandments. Love them by looking at their hidden faith in Me. They have a zeal for Me but without real knowledge. (Feel how heavy it is on the L-RD's heart.) Those prayers are not in vain. They are filling those bowls in heaven.

Promises for Israel

Ps. 121:4

Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

Jer. 29:11

For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, says the L-RD: thoughts of peace and not of evil; to give you a future and a hope.

Rom. 11:12 (As I laid on the heart of Shaul, my servant)

Now if their fall is riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!

That day is not far. That time is not distant. I will not abandon them and I will not relent from them until they say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the L-RD." THEN all the nations will know that I, the L-RD, have returned to my people.

Like the Egyptians who heard Joseph weeping when he revealed himself to his brothers, so all will fall silent in fear and trembling. And all will know that my people have returned to Me. And I will never forsake them. Their sins will be washed; their purity restored by the hyssop.



Thank you Joan for the *Parsha Mini Bites*. We appreciate your contributions to our newsletter. May HaShem continue to inspire you, guide you and eternally bless you. *Dee*

