



# OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

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**APRIL 2019**  
**TWO INVISIBLE**  
**STRUCTURES CONTRASTED**

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## STATEMENT OF BELIEF

*Outreach Israel Ministries  
and Messianic Apologetics*

There is One Almighty Creator God of the Universe, who has revealed Himself to us in the manifestations of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) came in fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies of the Scriptures and is fully God. It is mandatory for us to believe in a Divine Redeemer to be saved. Salvation is a free gift of God to all who receive Messiah Yeshua into their lives and confess of their sins. Those who reject Messiah will be consigned to eternal punishment.

The Holy Scriptures, Genesis-Revelation, are the inspired, infallible Word of God as revealed in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts.

**Outreach Israel News** is the monthly newsletter of Outreach Israel Ministries, a non-profit organization with an emphasis on reaching, teaching, and encouraging the Messianic community. Subscription to **Outreach Israel News** is without cost and supported only by donation.

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OIM is a 501(c)(3) non-profit  
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All Believers in Israel's Messiah are to be regarded as a part of the Commonwealth of Israel. Jewish and non-Jewish Believers are to respect one another in mutual love as brothers and sisters, and are to work together for the salvation of the Jewish people and return of Israel's Messiah.

The Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy) is the foundation of all Scripture, was followed by our Messiah Yeshua, and is to still be studied and heeded by Believers today.

Yeshua the Messiah is coming to gather the Believers after the Tribulation period.

OIM is an *agapē* ministry, freely and benevolently giving the vast majority of its teachings and resources, without charge, to those who desire to be spiritually nourished.

*For a fuller Statement of Faith, consult the OIM website*

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# OIM UPDATE

April 2019

At the beginning of January of this year, we were all expecting to be able to purchase the home-office that we had been leasing in North Dallas, since relocating back to Texas at the end of 2012. As I write this at the beginning of April, we have instead moved out of North Dallas to the McKinney area, in a much newer home, and with a much larger office presently being readied in a remodel. Twenty-one years ago, I was in my junior year of high school, and moved away from McKinney, Texas to go to Honduras for eight months, and returned to America to attend the University of Oklahoma—all as a part of our family's "spiritual scavenger hunt." To say that things are a bit surreal at this point, as I continue to get familiar to new surroundings and routines, would be a total understatement. **I have literally moved "full circle."**

During the past month, in my makeshift office of one small desk with two screens for my Windows and Macintosh computers, I have been spending a great deal of time in prayer and contemplation regarding how and why we ended up where we were back in 1998. What does it represent? What does it signal? How much do each of us forget how God is in complete control of our lives—especially as it regards the long term? I certainly have been asking many questions to myself, others, and to the Lord. I cannot say that I have all of the answers today, but I can say that we have entered into a very important time of both family and ministry transition. I can also say that we may have completely under-estimated the importance of this relocation, given a number of the things that we have all been prompted to consider.

Our family ministry, Outreach Israel and Messianic Apologetics, is not just getting ready to start a new chapter; **we are getting ready to write a new volume.** The experiences we have had, the people we have met, and most especially the subjects we have had to consider, have led us to this point. I know that I am praying like I never have before, that my faith has been stretched, and that I have had to completely place my life in the hands of our Heavenly Father. Is the only reason we had to relocate because moving out of North Dallas was a better financial decision? Because we all like the peace and quiet of a more rural setting? Or might it signal something else? I have been rou-

tinely asking myself three questions, and have been praying what I am supposed to know about how these relate to the new disposition in which I find myself.

**Where am I?** For certain, I am not in an urban environment any more, even though I am hardly isolated—McKinney was rated in 2014 as the #1 place to live in the United States, after all! I pray that I am geographically located in a peaceful setting, where I can accomplish the work and tasks God has for me, without some of the growing concerns that city life brings with it. I do not know where you live, or what the demographics are like—but it is safe to say that if you are in an urban environment, you have to deal with more progressive and liberal people, as well as an increasing number of people who are hostile to the good news of Yeshua, to Israel, and to the Jewish community. As a Messianic person, I do not want to be living close to those who may be openly opposed to what I believe and what I stand for. If there is any kind of possible incident where people of faith are targeted, I want to be as far away from the downtown area of a major city as is appropriate.

**When am I?** Looking back on the past twenty-one years since I lived in the McKinney, TX area, that the world is presently on a straight course to Hell is something difficult for Bible Believers to refute. Many of the things that my family was concerned about, involving the end-times and potential difficulties facing God’s people, could be a tangible reality in the not-too-distant future. While I have been able to contribute a great deal via my writings and research to Messianic theology, and was able to go to college and seminary, my life has not manifested itself in the same way as most of my peers. A huge part of this has to be because of when we are in human history, what God is doing through the Messianic movement, and the contribution that I hope I



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**Updates exclusive to app subscribers are sent out every day!**

can make in helping to facilitate spiritual stability and answers to the many questions that are being asked.

***How do I do ministry?*** As I have been patiently waiting to see my new office put together, and the remodeling completed, I have had some downtime to mentally decompress and spiritually be probed regarding what I need to possibly do differently regarding ministry. Have I been employing social media in the best way? How might we need to change future video and audio teachings? Do we need a fresh start and reboot on a number of things, as we position ourselves to be far more responsive to the needs of people within the Messianic community? These questions, and many more, have certainly been on my mind during this transitional season.

For quite some time, I have personally believed that the Lord called our family into full time Messianic ministry to make a significant contribution for ***The Final Stretch***. I do not know how long this "final stretch" is going to be, but I do think that it will take us right to the precipice of the Second Coming of Yeshua. God has always provided my family with what we need to accomplish the mission, and He has always protected us from undue harm. In His grace and mercy to us, He has also given us seasons such as these to seek Him in new and imperative ways.

A new volume is getting ready to begin for Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics. We are very thankful and grateful for all of your prayers and support of our efforts during this time! We are humbled that you have decided to join with us, for all of the assignments and labor that the God of Israel has in store!

Blessings and shalom,            John McKee

**Be sure to update your records  
with our new mailing address:**

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# TWO INVISIBLE STRUCTURES CONSTRASTED

by Mark Huey

The other day, while working out and meditating upon the Holy One and His Majesty, I had some penetrating thoughts on some challenges bewildering many of the followers of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The specific topic of “**lack of unity**” scrolled up in my mind. What has happened, since the sacrifice and resurrection, that has contributed to this failure of Yeshua’s followers to implement His parting pleas at what has been labeled the Last Supper or His final Passover *seder*? After all, according to the Apostle John’s testimony, the words spoken by the Savior were *not* exclusively for those gathered, but also for *all* who would eventually believe in Him, with the goal of unity being evidence of the *agapē* love ushering forth from redeemed hearts of flesh:

“Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You; for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received *them* and truly understood that I came forth from You, **and they believed that You sent Me**. I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours; and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them. I am no longer in the world; and *yet* they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, *the name* which You have given Me, **that they may be one even as We are**. While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled. But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so **that they may have My joy** made full in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. **I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one**. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. **Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth**. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. **For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth**. I do not ask on behalf of these alone,

but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me" (John 17:7-23, NASU).

While contemplating this spiritual conundrum, which allows debilitating disunity to prevail in the Body of Messiah, my mind flashed on an illuminating passage written by the Apostle Paul to Believers in Asia Minor. Here in unvarnished terms, the intrinsic forces causing an obvious lack of unity that are found in the created order were described. Thankfully, the Divine solution to the challenging problem is also articulated. However, despite the profound specific details described below, for subtle nefarious reasons the followers of the Messiah continue to be subject to the formidable adversaries that wage continual war against the purposes of the Almighty One. Unsurprisingly, these include the (1) world system, (2) the fleshly carnal nature of man, and (3) the Devil who is the accuser of the brethren:

**"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which [1] you formerly walked according to the course of this world, [2] according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too [3] all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Messiah (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Messiah Yeshua, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Messiah Yeshua. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Messiah Yeshua for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called 'Uncircumcision' by the so-called 'Circumcision,' which is performed in the flesh by human hands—**

*remember* that you were at that time separate from Messiah, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Messiah Yeshua you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Messiah. **For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity. . . so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.** AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR [Isaiah 57:19; 52:7; Zechariah 9:10]; **for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.** So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, **having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Messiah Yeshua Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit"** (Ephesians 2:1-22, NASU).

Here in the context of telling the predominantly non-Jewish Believers in Asia Minor, their positional equality with the Jewish people in the Body of Messiah through their faith in Yeshua, Paul elaborates about their former separation in contrast to their new inclusion with the Commonwealth of Israel and reception of the covenants of promise. Without equivocation, Paul goes on to say that due to the sacrificial work of Yeshua, the physical and spiritual "**barrier of a dividing wall**" has been removed. This allows the "**one new man**" united by and in the love of the Messiah to emerge, because the ancient rivalries, hatred, and generational enmity have been replaced by peaceful coexistence. Now, both Jewish and non-Jewish Believers can finally be at peace with one another, they can mutually respect and unconditionally love each other, and they can manifest the unity desired by Yeshua and flourish in Him.

Historically, such a powerful display of love and unity took place during the early years of the post-resurrection era, as recorded in the Book of Acts and by historians like Josephus. As a result, the gospel of Messiah Yeshua spread throughout the Mediterranean basin and Roman Empire, to Jewish people and those of the nations at large. Subsequently, the good news was proclaimed first to Jewish people in Diaspora synagogues, residing in most



commercial cities. Be they Greek or Roman or North African or Middle Eastern towns, the apostles and early disciples entered these communities and went first to the synagogues where the Torah and the Prophets were being read and discussed every *Shabbat* or Sabbath. There they proclaimed the gospel to the Jew first and then to the Greek (Romans 1:16).

In a matter of decades, the world was turned upside down (Acts 17:6), as the gospel went forth with power and often with the witness of signs, wonders, and miracles. As one can imagine, the Accuser of the brethren was extremely upset with the saving grace among the Jewish people, and with increasing momentum, even among Greeks and Romans, as the ultimate call of Israel to be a "light to the nations" (Isaiah 42:6; 49:6; et. al.) was manifesting via the work of the Messianic Jewish Believers. In the spirit realm, Satan could see that human beings were being born from above and becoming literally "temples" of the Holy Spirit, as the Lord took up residence in their hearts. This had to be very upsetting to the enemy of our souls, who lamentably primarily exists "to steal, kill, and destroy" (John 10:10). However, he is indeed a brilliant created archangel, who ever since the Garden of Eden, has attempted to thwart the purposes of God by exploiting the carnal nature of humanity.

One can only fathom how enraged the "angel of light" became when he witnessed mere human vessels, from both a Jewish heritage and the nations now united in the Messiah, once the barrier was demolished by the death of Yeshua. Now empowered by the Holy Spirit, these holy ones, compelled by the indwelling love of the Spirit, and unified via the banner of Messiah Yeshua with repentant belief in the atonement provided by His sacrifice, spread the gospel like a wild fire. Hence, the "god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4) had to resort to a different strategy. But the architect of evil was up to the task. After all, the world system he presides over consisting of powers, ruthless rulers, world forces of darkness, and principalities (Ephesians 6:12; Romans 8:38) were all at his disposal.

In addition, the wicked one was very aware of the human proclivity to operate by its fallen carnal nature inherited from Adam. Hence the formidable foes of (1) the world, (2) the flesh, and (3) the Devil, still led by the nefarious schemes of the "prince of the power of air," began to orchestrate and coordinate incessant attacks upon the purposes and will of God. Ingeniously, because he is an unseen entity, Satan realized that the barrier or wall of separation (ostensibly established from ancient Jewish interpretations on how the Temple grounds made a distinction between the outer court, the holy place, and the Holy of Holies), needed to be rebuilt to keep Jewish people and those of the nations, divided and in disarray. The universal principle

regarding disorder and lack of cohesiveness has always applied: "united one stands, divided one falls!"

How then could Satan divide the "redeemed ones" with yet another invisible barrier of separation that the Messiah had destroyed? How about reconstructing another unseen wall that people do not even know exists?

Ironically, if people truly knew the history of Israel and the formation of the Church system in the Second-Fourth Centuries C.E., they would be able to identify the many wiles of the Devil that have been used to keep Jews and Gentiles at each other's throats. But lamentably, knowledge of Church history tends to be scant. Consequently, the wall of separation began to be rebuilt by Satanically-influenced man-made bricks. Those bricks consist of the plethora of false religions, cults, sects, and other distractions that humanity has conceived which focus worship on anything other than the Holy One of Israel.

However contemporaneously, there was yet another spiritual structure being built. The Apostle Peter, in communicating to Believers, "To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Yeshua the Messiah and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure" (1 Peter 1:1-2, NASU), describes this invisible structure. This was and remains currently "a spiritual house" that was being built by "living stones," who are the individual saints or Believers saved by God's grace. Nevertheless, take note that in his letter, he first warns his readers about the ungodly human behaviors that disrupt and impede the completion of the "spiritual house" being built on the Rock of Salvation:

**"Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Messiah Yeshua. For *this* is contained in Scripture: 'BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER *stone*, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED [Isaiah 28:16].'** This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, **'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME**

THE VERY CORNER *stone* [Psalm 118:22],<sup>8</sup> and, 'A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE [Isaiah 8:14]'; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this *doom* they were also appointed. **But you are A CHOSEN RACE** [Isaiah 43:20, LXX; Deuteronomy 7:6; 10:15], **A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD** [Exodus 19:6; Isaiah 61:6], **A HOLY NATION** [Exodus 19:6], **A PEOPLE FOR *God's* OWN POSSESSION** [Isaiah 43:21, LXX; Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 4:20; 7:6; 14:2], **so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him** [Isaiah 43:21] **who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY** [Hosea 2:23]. **Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but *use it* as bondslaves of God. Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king. Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. For this *finds* favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.** For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer *for it* you patiently endure it, this *finds* favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Messiah also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH [Isaiah 53:9]; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. **For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have**

returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls” (1 Peter 2:1-25).

Upon reading this rather lengthy summary that leads one back to the Shepherd of our souls, note the dissimilarity between the two invisible structures under construction: (1) the wall of separation by the Devil, the architect of evil, and (2) the spiritual house by the Holy One of Israel, who in and of Himself is the chief cornerstone. ***This contrast could not be any more stark.*** After all, a wall of separation is designed to keep Jew and Gentile divided, while a spiritual house is built to encompass and promote the brotherhood of humanity, and glorify the unity founded on love for one another.

As my thoughts envisioned these two structures, I noticed that one was being built by bricks and the other was being built by living stones. Immediately, I was reminded that stones or rocks are created by the Almighty One when He formed the land masses. On the other hand, mankind essentially takes elements of the creation and makes bricks. While a master mason might have to fashion a stone with a chisel in order to knock off the rough edges (sanctification process) before placing it in a building under construction, a stone or rock was originally created by the Creator. By contrast, a brick is formed by simply taking physical particles found in the geological world and forming a hardened brick. Stones for God’s building are made by God, while human beings make bricks for its wall of separation.

Suddenly it dawned on me that all of the man-made religious systems concocted by fallen men and women, influenced by the world system, are literally the very partition wall that has been constructed! But it is not just religious institutions that form the wall. What about the numerous other things which people worship other than the Holy One of Israel? Things like self, money, power, physical prowess, and a multitude of other distractions flashed through my mind. After all, the formidable foes facing mankind, (1) the world, (2) the flesh, and (3) the Devil can and will do everything possible to redirect our thoughts and attention away from worshipping the true Creator God!

These thought provoking images in my mind allowed me to ponder exactly what it was that kept these two structures together, and immediately my eyes focused on the “mortar” that held the bricks together. Well, I thought, if the Devil is the architect, and the bricks are the various world religions, cults, sects, and other man-made institutions and distractions, the mortar could possibly be the very fleshy carnal nature of humanity. After all, if a temporal wall built on lies and the wiles of the Devil begins to dete-

riorate, and perhaps needs some repair, humanity needs to muster up some new moisture and mixture of elements to reset the hole or gap. This I concluded, required a work of man's fleshly nature seeking alternative items to worship, before the mortar dries and solidifies the brick or bricks back into place.

On the other hand, what is holding the living stones together, as the Lord builds His spiritual house and Kingdom on Earth, and also prepares a place for His beloved in the Father's house above?

"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. **In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.** If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, **that where I am, there you may be also**" (John 14:1-3, NASU).

In his letter, the Apostle Peter indicated that "**spiritual sacrifices**" are an integral part of the house, and from that description, one can conclude that it is the Spirit of God indwelling the "**stones**" of saints or holy ones, who keep the spiritual house of God from collapsing. Of course, the Chief Architect, the Messiah Yeshua, the Cornerstone Himself, is vigilantly working to maintain and build upon the house, and thankfully, He has sent the Comforter and Helper/Teacher, the Holy Spirit, to help the living stones accomplish His work of spiritual Kingdom building until He returns to rule and reign from Jerusalem:

**"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.** I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you *will* see Me; because I live, you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, **and I in you.** He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.' Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, 'Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?' Yeshua answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and **We will come to him and make Our abode with him.** He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me. These

things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. **But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful”** (John 14:16-27, NASU).

So with all of these images and thoughts being noted, what can one conclude, since most people in the world today, do not even know that these invisible structures even exist? After all, in order to comprehend what is happening in the spiritual realm, one must have the spiritual eyes to see (1 Corinthians 2:12-16). Surely there is visible evidence of the **“spiritual house”** under construction because the Body of Messiah, even with its many flaws, continues to mature and spread the good news to a lost and needy world. On the other hand, there is also tangible evidence of the wall separating and discouraging the great possibilities of the one new man, and the joint venture necessary to prepare the way for the return of the Messiah. For even the Prophet Isaiah noted in this passage, the need for Israel and the nations to collaborate during the restoration of Israel to the Promised Land:

**“And now says the LORD, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel might be gathered to Him (For I am honored in the sight of the LORD, and My God is My strength), He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.’ Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel and its Holy One, to the despised One, to the One abhorred by the nation, to the Servant of rulers, ‘Kings will see and arise, princes will also bow down, because of the LORD who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel who has chosen You.’ Thus says the LORD, ‘In a favorable time I have answered You, and in a day of salvation I have helped You; and I will keep You and give You for a covenant of the people, to restore the land, to make *them* inherit the desolate heritages; saying to those who are bound, “Go forth,” to those who are in darkness, “Show yourselves” Along the roads they will feed, and their pasture *will be* on all**

**bare heights.** They will not hunger or thirst, nor will the scorching heat or sun strike them down; for He who has compassion on them will lead them and will guide them to springs of water. I will make all My mountains a road, and My highways will be raised up. **Behold, these will come from afar; and lo, these *will come* from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Sinim.** Shout for joy, O heavens! And rejoice, O earth! Break forth into joyful shouting, O mountains! For the LORD has comforted His people and will have compassion on His afflicted. But Zion said, 'The LORD has forsaken me, and the Lord has forgotten me.' Can a woman forget her nursing child and have no compassion on the son of her womb? **Even these may forget, but I will not forget you.** 'Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me. Your builders hurry; your destroyers and devastators will depart from you. Lift up your eyes and look around; all of them gather together, they come to you. As I live,' declares LORD, 'You will surely put on all of them as jewels and bind them on as a bride. For your waste and desolate places and your destroyed land—surely now you will be too cramped for the inhabitants, and those who swallowed you will be far away. The children of whom you were bereaved will yet say in your ears, "The place is too cramped for me; make room for me that I may live *here*." Then you will say in your heart, "Who has begotten these for me, since I have been bereaved of my children and am barren, an exile and a wanderer? And who has reared these? Behold, I was left alone; from where did these come?"' **Thus says the Lord GOD, 'Behold, I will lift up My hand to the nations And set up My standard to the peoples; And they will bring your sons in *their* bosom, And your daughters will be carried on *their* shoulders. Kings will be your guardians, and their princesses your nurses. They will bow down to you with their faces to the earth and lick the dust of your feet; and you will know that I am the LORD; those who hopefully wait for Me will not be put to shame''** (Isaiah 49:5-23, NASU).

However, despite the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in those who claim to be followers of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because of belief in the atoning work of Messiah Yeshua, there continues to be a serious lack of unity and love between brethren from both Jewish and non-Jewish backgrounds. **Why does the disunity, despite the destruction of**

the barrier of separation between Jew and Gentile, continue to plague the work of the Holy One and impede the work He has foreordained to accomplish before the return of the Messiah?

Perhaps the wisdom imparted by James the Just in his epistle best describes what he was aware of in his era, which continues even today to influence the progress of the restoration of Israel as anticipated in the Holy Scriptures:

**"Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well. Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well. Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires. So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water? Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh. Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwav-**



ering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace” (James 3:1-18), NASU).

Is it possible that there are teachers of the Bible who should *not* be teaching? Or leaders who should *not* be leading? Surely words spoken that tear down people and relationships are not from the Spirit of God. Instead, bitter jealousy and selfish ambition (products of the flesh) are far too prevalent in far too many teachers and leaders, who claim to be speaking and working for the purposes of God Almighty. But James identifies the source of those words and claims are from the very pit of Hell.

Therefore, it is relatively simple to discern that when one hears evil words or detects pride and selfish ambition—instead of pure thoughts, or peaceable, gentle, reasonable statements, full of mercy, and recognizable “good fruit” that is unwavering without hypocrisy—one can conclude from where the ultimate place these poisonous words and despicable actions originate. Simply stated, the cause for lack of unity derives from either the fleshly nature or the Earthly wisdom from below. **In both cases, children of God need to be aware!** A recommendation is to *not* listen to teachers or follow leaders who promote themselves or their individual ministerial efforts. Be mindful of the many warnings of Yeshua and the Apostles which have indicated how false prophets and teachers were prevalent in the world, even from the First Century. **How more so have they proliferated in modern times, as the influences of the world, the flesh, and the devil have grown exponentially and continue to harass God’s people?**

Finally, let these statements by the Apostle Paul to the “**saints in light**” in Colossae encourage us to recognize the truth of Yeshua’s Divinity, and that He not only created all things visible and invisible, but He ultimately rules over all—and by His grace, He is holding all things together!

**“For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and trans-**

ferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. **He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.** For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. **He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together”** (Colossians 1:9-17, NASU).

To summarize, may the Holy One through His Spirit give us the eyes to see and the ears to hear what have been and continue to be spiritual structures that absolutely exist. One is a wall to foster division, strife, and impede the progress of the gospel. And the other is a spiritual house designed to be a place where the Body of Messiah resides, matures, and completes the mission to take the good news to the world until the Messiah returns. But these two invisible structures will be at odds with one another, unless the compelling force of *agapē* love prevails in the hearts of the redeemed. The Apostle Paul issues challenging remarks on how love is to be astutely manifest among the Believers:

**“Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled *the* law.** For this, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET [Exodus 20:13-15, 17; Deuteronomy 5:17-19],’ and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF [Leviticus 19:18].’ **Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of *the* law.** *Do* this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is near. **Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Yeshua the Messiah, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts”** (Romans 13:8-14, NASU).

May these Scriptures have their compelling work in all of our hearts, until the “one new man” completes the will and purposes of the Holy One of Israel, and He returns in all His glory!

# COUNTING THE OMER

A Daily Devotional Toward Shavuot



WILLIAM MARK HUEY

## COUNTING THE OMER

A Daily Devotional Toward Shavuot

The seven-week period between the Biblical festivals of Passover and *Shavuot*, or Pentecost, is the season of Counting the Omer (Leviticus 23:10-16; Deuteronomy 16:9-11). Originally in the Tabernacle and Temple of Ancient Israel, the priests were to present special offerings before the Lord each day for the fifty-day count. Psalm 67 was among the hymns recited and employed to offer praise and adoration to Him. Since the destruction of the Second Temple, various Jewish traditions have been developed in order to make the seven-week or fifty-day Omer Count a very special time to focus on God, His blessings, and the important themes of *Shavuot*.

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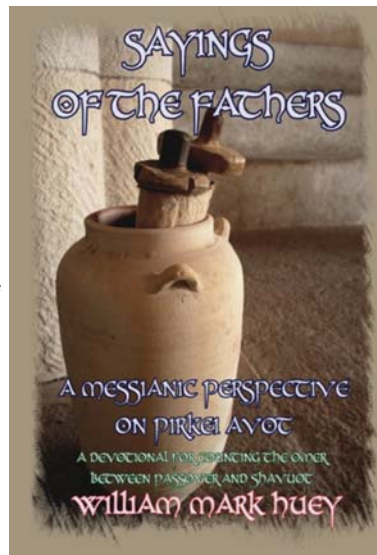
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