

OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

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JANUARY 2020

**IS IT IMPOSSIBLE TO ADDRESS
MEN AND WOMEN?**

OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

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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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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

January 2020

Last month on the precipice of the next decade, the OIM News update challenged and exhorted the “believing” community of faith to go on the “offense,” in the invisible spiritual warfare which has persisted since the Fall of humanity at the Garden of Eden event. Little did we realize it then, that as the year was ending, a significant controversy was churning in the evangelical community because of an editorial article written in *Christianity Today*. One of my best friends, and another close relative—both claiming long held Christian beliefs—revealed that they were on the opposite side of the divisive directive being declared about the leader of the American republic. Quite frankly, this revelation was very shocking! In each case, it was apparent that neither person was able to discern the bigger picture from a spiritual perspective. Each was obviously ignorant of some elementary firsthand facts, and clearly propagandized by the prince of the power of air (Ephesians 2:2). Rather than react with a volley of words which could devolve into fruitless arguments or acrimonious debate, we paused and approached the Lord in prayer and supplication, for wisdom on how to delicately handle these disturbing circumstances.

After all, the struggles and battles which occur in the unseen “heavenly” realm—**“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places”** (Ephesians 6:12, NASU)—are predominantly perceptible through the imparted “spirit of wisdom” and “revelation in the knowledge of Him,” primarily because the “eyes of the heart” have been enlightened through the lens of spiritual illumination to the hope of His calling:

“[T]hat the God of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, the Father of glory, **may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened**, so that you will know what is **the hope of His calling**, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, **and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.** *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might” (Ephesians 1:17-19, NASU).

In other words, according to 1 Corinthians 2:12-16, the fact remains that **only** those who have received the gift of the indwelling Spirit of God, are potentially capable of perceiving that there are nefarious created entities (noted above) which are allowed to operate in the heavenly realm, negatively

impacting the tangible, visible realm where humanity resides. As a result, the **"called out"** ones, having been **appraised with the mind of Messiah**, must continually appeal to the Almighty One to fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:12). Nevertheless, the incessant conflict between "natural minded" men and women, and those spiritually appraised, has raged on since the Fall:

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, **so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words***. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, **because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM [Isaiah 40:13]? But we have the mind of Messiah"** (1 Corinthians 2:12-16, NASU).

Our family was presented with a dilemma, because of the possibility that a political opinion could cause a serious breach in relationships which go back decades, and even to birth. All sorts of thoughts float through the mind as you try to discern and analyze why people you have known so intimately, are on the opposite side of the political spectrum. You certainly do not want to judge—but as you call upon the Lord for wisdom and direction on how to proceed with the relationship—it is typical that several Scriptures come to mind. In each case, because their frontal, aggressive, spiritual attacks were so intense, even these comments from Yeshua, following His statements about **"to whom much is given, much is required,"** regarding rewards or punishment to His slaves/servants, were quite sobering:

"Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division; for from now on five *members* in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law" (Luke 12:51-53, NASU).

Of course, contemplating these verses was alarming! Then upon further prayer and meditation, the following passage came to mind, which seems to be a different perspective regarding the heavenly realm—as well as offering a gentler way to assess and understand the conflict with loved ones that we were experiencing:

"Yeshua presented another parable to them, saying, **"The kingdom of**

heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. **But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also.** The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' And he said to them, '**An enemy has done this!**' The slaves said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. **Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers,** "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn"' (Matthew 13:24-30, NASU).

In the parable of the wheat and the tares, Yeshua, who is constantly referencing the "**kingdom of heaven**" in His utterances communicated to Him by His Heavenly Father (John 12:49-50), gives His followers a description of what they are going to encounter in the physical realm. Here, although the landowner sowed good seed that is sprouting up as fruitful wheat, the enemy has surreptitiously sown worthless tares in and amongst the eventual harvest. This distinction of the two similar looking plants is noted by the slaves/servants of the landowner, with a request from them on what should be done to the tares. Initially, the impulse from the slaves is to immediately gather up the tares so that they do not impede the growth of the wheat. But the landowner, not wanting to possibly destroy some wheat with a premature extraction of tares from the field, instructs his servants to wait until the ultimate harvest where the separation of tares from the wheat will be completed.

Of course, when contemplating the parable of the wheat and the tares, another parable about the sheep and the goats comes to mind—when at the end of the instruction about how slaves handle the talents they have received, Yeshua contrasts the ultimate disposition of the sheep and the goats:

"But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him; **and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.** Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'" (Matthew 25:31-34, NASU).

These two parables are extremely explicit regarding the two similarly appearing plants and animals. While from a distance, or even close up, the

tares might look like wheat and the goats might resemble sheep—only the Holy One in His ultimate judgment will be able to precisely and correctly separate people or nations for their eternal destination. Therefore, it is not up to His followers to prematurely make that determination. Instead, it is the Believer’s responsibility to continue to share the love of the Messiah and to pray for those individuals (like tares and goats), who might be in the wheat fields or among the herds of the faithful sheep.

With sincere intercession for beloved relatives and friends paramount, there is a disturbing passage from 2 Thessalonians, despite not knowing the precise hour of Yeshua’s return, which also came to heart and mind:

“Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah and our gathering together to Him, that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. **Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first**, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. **For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way**. Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; *that is*, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. **For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness**” (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, NASU).

According to this passage, at some future time, God Himself is going to send a **“deluding influence”** upon the world. While a political opinion does not necessarily qualify as to what this prophecy describes, it can be considered a **“test”** of where people are regarding their discernment and understanding of the kingdom of heaven, and how the Holy One has often used flawed humans to accomplish His will upon the Earth. The Biblical examples range from Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Nebuchadnezzar, Jehu, Cyrus, Peter, Paul, and a multitude of others. Of course, if one does not appreciate Biblical and historical events down through the millennia, then they are sus-

ceptible to deception. Perhaps this ignorance of facts and lack of Bible study, is why many come to the conclusions they advocate.

Nevertheless, it is the Believer's obligation to point out the obvious in a loving manner, and pray that what is communicated is received by a willing heart which wants to know the truth about what God is currently doing in the world at this point in time. To that end, the use of Scripture, "**sharper than a two-edge sword**" (Hebrews 4:12), coupled with firsthand facts, are the two methods recommended, as Believers go on the offense to share not only the good news, but the actual accounts of a matter. To that end, may our efforts bear fruit for the kingdom of God! Because at some point in the future, "**false messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce great signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, even the elect**" (Matthew 24:24, NRSV).

In conclusion, the key for ALL is to seek the Lord and call upon Him for revelation and understanding in these perilous times:

"Seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; **and let him return to the LORD, and He will have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.** For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' declares the LORD. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding *in the matter* for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:6-11, NASU).

Perhaps in His mercy, He will use some of us to lead those back from the error of their ways:

"My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20, NASU).

May the Lord bless you and keep you—as you go on the offense this year! **Thank you for your continued support of our efforts—your valued prayers and offerings—as we continue the vital work of ministry at Outreach Israel and Messianic Apologetics!**

Until the restoration of all things,
Mark Huey

IS IT IMPOSSIBLE TO ADDRESS MEN AND WOMEN?

by J.K. McKee

adapted from the 354-page book Men and Women in the Body of Messiah

Many people in today's broad Messianic community are willing to question just about everything. There are ongoing debates as to whether or not Yeshua the Messiah is genuinely God, or if He is just a supernatural yet ultimately created being. There are people who believe in doctrines such as psychopannychy ("soul sleep") and annihilation. There are discussions about the origin of the Apostolic Scriptures (New Testament), and whether they were originally written in Hebrew or Greek, *and* what texts should be considered canonical or spurious. There are people who think it is acceptable to include Medieval Jewish mysticism as a part of their regimen of Bible study, considering the Kabbalah to be "okay." There are people who try to synthesize every single saying of Yeshua the Messiah with the Jewish Sages of many centuries later—and then there are those who want nothing to do with the Jewish Sages. There are those who have put together their own restored "Biblical calendars." There are even people you will encounter, from time to time, who believe that Planet Earth is a flat disk and not a sphere. And of course, may we never forget all of the ongoing and increasingly diverse series of end-time prognostications we encounter. . . .

Certainly with some of the open-mindedness and variance of opinion "out there"—on a whole host of issues—mainstream discussions and debates taking place in academic Jewish and Christian settings, would seemingly be permitted. It has to be observed, in all of my family's years (since 1995) of being a part of the Messianic movement, there is one huge issue which Messianic people, congregational leaders, and teachers of note are seldom willing to discuss or evaluate. In fact, this issue is often considered to be off-limits, if not completely *Verboten*. In spite of there being a range of issues that Messianic people feel free to discuss—including at times strongly questioning the Divinity of Yeshua—it is odd that contemporary discussions over **men and women in the Body of Messiah**, and specifically women in ministry, cannot frequently be brought up. If there are people we may encounter in our midst who think that certain books of the New Testament might not be too inspired of God, then surely we can discuss whether or not husbands and wives should be co-leaders of their families, and whether or not males and females can be co-leaders of the local assembly.

Where does today's Messianic community stand on men and women?

To many people in today's broad Messianic movement, the issues involving the place of husbands and wives in the family, as well as men and women in the local assembly, is a done deal. *Husbands lead the family, and wives abide by their husbands' decisions. Men lead the congregation, and women are there to help facilitate congregational functions.* Any position about men and women in the Body of Messiah which might invoke terms such as co-equal, shared responsibility, and mutual submission are often viewed as compromise with the prevailing culture at best, or capitulation to liberal theology at worst. You do not just throw around the term "egalitarian" in the Messianic movement, unless you really are willing to experience some blowback.

"In December 1987, the newly formed Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood met in Danvers, Massachusetts, and wrote the *Danvers Statement*,"¹ a document that almost all of today's Messianic congregational leaders and teachers would probably be seen to agree with.² Many people in today's broad Messianic movement would sit to the Right of the Danvers Statement. Anyone holding to any sort of egalitarian position, where women can serve as the equals of men within the teaching and leadership structure of a local assembly—even when agreeing with various remarks within the Danvers Statement—is still going to sit to the Left of the Danvers Statement.

The majority of the formal and academic writing you will encounter, which will invoke the label "Messianic" in some way, will with a handful of exceptions, almost always represent a complementarian view of men and women in the Body of Messiah. The 2001 compilation book *Voices of Messianic Judaism*, represented essays in favor of women serving in leadership,³ and those favoring male exclusive leadership in the assembly.⁴ In 2013, a chapter on "Messianic Judaism and Women"⁵ appeared in *Introduction to Messianic Judaism*, and while recognizing that there are younger people in

¹ John Piper and Wayne Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions: An Overview of Central Concerns about Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 83.

² *Ibid.*, pp 83-86.

³ Ruth Fleischer, "Women Can Be in Leadership," in Dan Cohn-Sherbok, ed., *Voices of Messianic Judaism* (Baltimore: Lederer Books, 2001), pp 151-157.

⁴ Nadler, "Male Leadership and the Role of Women," in *Ibid.*, pp 159-168.

Nadler is also the author of *Developing Healthy Messianic Congregations* (Charlotte: Word of Messiah Ministries, 2016).

⁵ Rachel Wolf, "Messianic Judaism and Women," in David J. Rudolph and Joel Willits, eds. *Introduction to Messianic Judaism: Its Ecclesial Context and Biblical Foundations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), pp 98-106.

the Messianic Jewish movement, at least, considering egalitarian perspectives, that a more traditional role for women as homemakers and serving in a secondary capacity to men, should probably be preferred. It is fair to say that as the 2020s approach, the Messianic Jewish movement will continue to be widely complementarian. However, the younger people in Messianic Judaism are very likely to be more open-minded and considerate of egalitarian perspectives regarding men and women, and specifically female leaders, within the Body of Messiah. It is, however, to be witnessed that a recent Messianic Jewish book released on the issue of marriage (2017), was only intended to be read by men and not by women.⁶ This at least demonstrates that facilitating discussions on men and women in the Body of Messiah, where females can expect to be afforded more opportunities, is going to be something long and hard fought in sectors of the Messianic Jewish movement.

When moving outside of the Messianic Jewish movement, into other sectors, complementarian to rigid patriarchal perspectives, involving men and women, are what one is most likely to encounter. The perspectives of the One Law/One Torah sub-movement, reflect those of male leadership within the Body of Messiah, with females taking a secondary role.⁷ The Two-House sub-movement, at times, has been favorable to females taking on some leadership and teaching roles,⁸ but the Ephraimite movement has also been heavily stigmatized by one of its major leaders endorsing and practicing polygamy⁹—something which evangelical Christian complementarians today, and all evangelical egalitarians, forthrightly reject as an aberration. On the whole, the perspectives regarding men and women one is likely to encounter in the independent Hebrew/Hebraic Roots movement, go beyond complementarianism, and instead will favor a patriarchal view of gender, with (married-)male privilege strongly emphasized.

As we move forward in time—and particularly as more and more Messianic young people receive a higher level of formal theological training than

⁶ First Fruits of Zion, with Grant Luton and Russ Resnik, *Adam Loves Eve: The Bible's Guide for Men Seeking a Better Marriage* (Marshfield, MO: First Fruits of Zion, 2017).

This book broadly follows the outline provided by Shalom Arush, *The Garden of Peace: A Marital Guide for Men Only*, trans. Lazer Brody (Jerusalem: Chut Shel Chessed Institutions, 2008).

⁷ Tim Hegg (1992). *The Role of Women in the Messianic Assembly*. Torah Resource. Retrieved 27 February, 2010, from <<http://torahresource.com>>; *What God has Joined Together: Biblical Foundations for Marriage* (Tacoma, WA: TorahResource, 2007).

⁸ Batya Ruth Wootten, *Mama's Torah: The Role of Women* (St. Cloud, FL: Key of David, 2004).

⁹ Moshe Koniuchowsky, *Sex and the Believer: Shocking Freedom of Sexuality in Torah* (Margate, FL: Your Arms to Israel Publishing, 2008).

their predecessors—that the pendulum will, albeit slowly, be shifting toward a more egalitarian position of men and women in the Body of Messiah, is inevitable. In our present season, it has already created tensions beneath the surface, as there are doubtlessly reforms which must be instituted regarding our approach to men and women in the Body of Messiah—theological reforms and cultural changes which tend to be opposed in various ways. While many of today’s Messianic leaders and teachers from the Baby Boomer generation recognize some need to maintain a relationship with those of the Millennial generation who will succeed them—there tends to be very poor, cross-generational communication, on issues such as men and women in the Body of Messiah.

Men and Women in the Body of Messiah and Some Personal Messianic Experience

Each of us is affected by our experience when it comes to people in the world at large, in the *ekklēsia* or Body of Messiah, and especially when it comes to approaching issues and controversies involving men and women. For over a decade now (2007-2018), I have had considerable difficulty and consternation with many in our contemporary Messianic movement, in simply *opening up the discussion and dialoguing* about issues involving males and females in the Body of Messiah, the equality of men and women, and males and females serving as co-leaders within the assembly and husbands and wives serving as co-leaders of the family. **Few of today’s Messianic teachers and leaders are willing to recognize that there are other points of view out there**, aside from a complementarian ideology. Far too many are obstinate to give other points of view a hearing, even if it simply means reading through a general resource such as *Two Views on Women in Ministry* (James R. Beck, ed. [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005]).

In my experience, broadly speaking, if one is found in today’s Messianic movement to either adhere to, or at least be strongly sympathetic to, an egalitarian ideology where women will be taking on a higher level of leadership than has been historically and traditionally seen in the Body of Messiah over many centuries—then such a person is widely thought to at best to be compromised, and interpreting the Scriptures irresponsibly. More likely, though, such an egalitarian or egalitarian-friendly person is believed to be in conformity with the spirit of the age and not the Holy Spirit.

What are some of the things I have witnessed, which caused me to reevaluate some of my views regarding men and women?

Even though as of today my family has been a part of the Messianic movement for twenty-five years (since 1995), I have never once been part of

a Messianic congregation where women have been incorporated into the leadership structure or apparatus, where the big decisions are made; all of the major decisions have been made by men. In twenty-five years, I have never been part of a Messianic congregation where the male congregational leader has ever said that his wife is his equal. Instead, all that has been emphasized is that the male congregational leader's wife submits to his authority and leadership—not that the husband and wife share leadership of their family, and are both involved in all major decisions, be they family or ministry related. Coming from a professional middle class family, where both men and women have accomplished some truly amazing things, I have been underwhelmed—to say the least—by a complementarian ideology present in the Messianic movement that is holding us back in far too many ways, **especially as we steadily approach the Messiah's return!**

Being part of the Messianic movement from 1995-2004, when I bothered to pay attention to issues involving males and females in the Body of Messiah, I heard some kind of complementarian viewpoint present. On occasion, I would hear opinions reflective of a complementarian-lite approach, which would advocate for a greater inclusion of women in the leadership and decision making structure of Messianic congregations. But early in my Messianic experience, my personal Bible studies were not too concerned with men and women, gender roles, or leadership. When I started my M.A. in Biblical Studies at Asbury Theological Seminary in 2005, though, I was immediately thrust into an egalitarian environment. I had no objections of any kind to being taught by female instructors, and certainly to having female student colleagues. Yet I was a bit perplexed when hearing about females being ordained as pastors and leaders. Some of my fellow male students, from various denominational traditions, let their voice be heard how they were opposed to it—and yet other male students were quite supportive. I knew that rushing off to judgment would be inappropriate—and that as I was making many adaptations as to how I was approaching the Holy Scriptures, the theological tools I was employing, and some of my methodology I was having to see altered—that if the Lord wanted me to consider changing my view of women in ministry, it would be done graciously and I would be open.

In a theology class I took in Spring 2006, one of our assigned textbooks was *Across the Spectrum: Understanding Issues in Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), edited by Gregory A. Boyd and Paul R. Eddy, where different topics were presented from multiple perspectives. *This is the best way for anyone to encounter the different facets and con-*

¹⁰ "The Women in Ministry Debate," in Gregory A. Boyd and Paul R. Eddy, eds., *Across the Spectrum: Understanding Issues in Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), pp 225-235.

tours of something debated in theology. One of the topics we had to consider was indeed, "The Women in Ministry Debate."¹⁰ I found it informative, but was not particularly ready to change my complementarian-lite position—although I did know that I would have to not be dismissive of egalitarians.

By the Spring of 2007, however, things began to steadily change, as I found myself more and more open to an egalitarian ideology. I took two classes that semester at Asbury, Exegesis of Romans and New Testament Introduction. At the beginning of Exegesis of Romans, we spent three weeks analyzing Romans 1 issues involving homosexuality, and our seminary at the time took a firm stance against the homosexual lifestyle and gay marriage. At the end of Exegesis of Romans, we had to weigh some of the demographic details of Romans 16, and reckon with the presence of a female apostle, Junia—something which surely affected present debates over women in ministry. In New Testament Introduction, while the discussion did not arise until near the end of the class, I was first presented with translation and perspective issues in 1 Timothy 2 that I had never heard before. So much of the debate has been polarized between those who hold the Pastoral Epistles (1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus) to uphold a complementarian ideology, and those who think that these letters are Deutero-Pauline and from a generation or two after Paul's death, that I was quite relieved to hear a perspective which held these letters to be authentically Pauline and that they could be interpreted somewhat differently. *Being in a Messianic movement that adheres to the post-resurrection era validity of the Torah, after all, certainly required me to interpret some Pauline passages differently!*

By the end of Spring 2007, I had posted an FAQ on the then-TNN Online website, "**Women in Ministry,**" which presented a number of the options that I had to consider from New Testament Introduction. While presenting multiple points of view, though, I had already privately moved from being a complementarian-lite to an egalitarian. In Summer, 2005, at my local Messianic congregation at the time, in Central Florida, I had witnessed that a new series of elders and deacons were appointed. They were obviously all male. By Spring 2007, over half of these male elders and deacons had been asked to step down or were removed, and some of them who had continued in leadership were incompetent and inept—with a huge (physical) stress placed upon the main congregational leader. Being a seminary student who was having to study many aspects of ministry—especially men and women as co-leaders of the Body of Messiah—I found myself saying things along the lines of, "They would prefer unqualified and unstable men to be in leadership, rather than qualified and stable women, especially when there are clear ex-

amples of it in the Apostolic Writings.”

In 2008, while it hit more independent Messianic and Hebrew/Hebraic Roots sectors, there was a wave of teaching that endorsed polygamy as a valid practice for contemporary men in the Body of Messiah. When you have an educational ministry with a website, it does not matter where questions originate or who is asking them, as an issue like polygamy is clearly present in Holy Scripture and all students of God’s Word confront it. This issue, and some of the stir it caused, served as a major road sign for me that ***everything regarding men and women in today’s Messianic movement was up for some review.*** I was very upset at the broadscale silence that I witnessed when the polygamy controversy hit, although I suspect that many just wanted it to go away and not give it any publicity. Recognizing that an endorsement of polygamy was representative of a failure in Messianic Biblical Studies, I wrote two lengthy articles in late Summer 2008, **“Addressing the Frequently Avoided Issues Messianics Encounter in the Torah,”** followed by **“Is Polygamy for Today? The Case Against Polygamy.”**¹¹

Surely, if there would be voices out there endorsing polygamy, then it would be entirely proper for there to be voices out there endorsing egalitarianism. At the end of 2008, my egalitarian views started to be more consciously integrated into various teachings, as I started the new year by releasing **“How Are We to Live as Modern Messianics?”** In the Spring of 2009, I also updated the “Women in Ministry” FAQ entry with some more data, as the polygamy fiasco did cause me to start acquiring many resources, books, and commentaries which were somehow related to contemporary debates between complementarians and egalitarians. This was highly important given the fact that within my Wednesday Night Bible Study podcast, I was going through **Ephesians** (2008-2009), **the Pastoral Epistles** (2010-2011), and later would go through **1 Corinthians** (2015), all letters which have significance to present discussions about men and women in the Body of Messiah.

When our family moved back to North Texas in 2012, my egalitarian ideology was hardly something that I hid from anyone. As I got reintegrated into the local Messianic Jewish community, people knew, when they asked me, that I did not hold to the more standard or customary positions regarding women in ministry, that you would find in the Messianic movement. But, from 2013-2016 I would honestly answer, “It is not the most important issue for me right now, although I am planning to address it another day—and

¹¹ I would be keen to reference the newly released article, which is negatively disposed toward polygamy. Toby Janicki. “Polygamy: Does the Bible Allow for Multiple Wives?” Messiah Journal Issue 128, Spring 2017/5778.

only plan to do so within the venue of our own ministry.” In the Spring of 2017, I heard a congregational message, from a guest speaker, which greatly offended me, as it defended a highly patriarchal view of male authority in the contemporary Body of Messiah. *The other day had arrived.* Throughout 2017 I worked on the lengthy analysis, “**Men and Women in the Body of Messiah: Answering 50 Crucial Questions,**” cross-examining the complementarian ideology of John Piper and Wayne Grudem from the resource *50 Crucial Questions: An Overview of Central Concerns about Manhood and Womanhood*. This analysis, however, would only be able to address evangelical Protestant complementarianism, and not some of the unique factors present regarding men and women in today’s Messianic movement.

The issue of men and women in the Body of Messiah, however, is one where our family’s experience for almost a quarter-decade, my seminary training, my continued education and review of issues, and our own family’s ideology of wanting all people to achieve great things—can find itself at odds with a majority of the present Messianic movement. Of course, seeing females elevated into greater positions of authority is not a salvation issue, but it can directly influence our effectiveness as we move into the future. We also know that we are not alone in our egalitarian convictions, although many prefer to keep a lower profile about them—mainly because of the small size of the Messianic community. And, like I said several years ago: **this is a topic we prefer to address in our own ministry venue**, and not necessarily at our local congregation or at major conference events. Yet, given the way things stand now, with great uncertainties in our world and the steady erosion of religious freedoms, it is time for a candid discussion about the place of men and women in the Body of Messiah, and some of the mistakes that our faith community has made.

Approaching Answering Messianic Questions and Issues

While in one’s local Messianic congregation or fellowship, one is more likely to hear complementarian perspectives on men and women in the Body of Messiah, it is hardly as though there is a complementarian monolith within the Messianic movement. When looking slightly below the surface, there is a wider array of opinions detectable. Most of these would be classified as complementarian-lite, with females taking on much more responsibility for leadership and teaching within the assembly, but with the position of senior congregational leader reserved for a male. There are a few, who might be seen to be egalitarian, and be willing to argue, at least in principle, that a female could be a senior leader of a Messianic congregation.

Varied perspectives regarding females in positions of Messianic leader-

ship, is actually not new to the Messianic movement of the Twenty-First Century. In her chapter, "Messianic Judaism and Women," appearing in the 2013 *Introduction to Messianic Judaism*, Rachel Wolf discusses how a number of the female Messianic Jewish pioneers were raised in independently-thinking Jewish environments, and were somewhat perplexed when highly conservative Christian perspectives were adopted by much of Messianic Judaism in the 1970s and 1980s:

"Most of the established female leaders in the Messianic Jewish community grew up in Jewish contexts that valued independent thinking. Early Messianic synagogues tended to adopt conservative Christian views, and though some Messianic Jewish women embraced this outlook on women's roles, others looked to Jewish sources as models. There is tension when it comes to identity because Messianic Jewish women come from a variety of backgrounds, and we find ourselves within a developing Messianic Jewish culture that includes many Gentiles."¹²

Some of the factors which have contributed to a mainly complementarian ideology prevailing in current Messianic Judaism, do involve some of the formal training of various leaders and rabbis at highly conservative (and dispensational) evangelical Protestant institutions. Not enough were, who have been formally trained in religious studies, or are going to be, theologically exposed to an egalitarian ideology. Many of the Jewish Believers in today's Messianic movement, raised in either a quasi-progressive Jewish environment or a nominally-religious Jewish environment, as Wolf notes above, are at somewhat of a conundrum as to the limitation of women in today's Messianic Judaism. Many of the non-Jewish Believers, attracted to the Messianic movement, come from highly conservative theological (and political) backgrounds. My own family would be an exception in this regard, as we are a bit more moderate. Our Wesleyan theological and spiritual heritage has a history of using women, whereas those from other Protestant traditions in today's Messianic community, are more likely to not have used women as much.

In my examination of addressing some of the specific questions and issues which have arisen regarding men and women in today's Messianic movement, I ran across the website for an independent Messianic fellowship, and saw the following asked in their FAQ section: "What is your stance on women teaching in the congregation?" I read the answer, and it is obviously reflective of the common position that women are to be valued in the assembly, God can surely use and speak through women, yet ultimately

¹² Rachel Wolf, "Messianic Judaism and Women," in *Introduction to Messianic Judaism*, 101.

males should be those teaching and leading the assembly as a whole:

Women have equal citizenship with Messiah (Galatians 3:28), are amazing at mentoring in small groups (Acts 18:26), excel at instructing younger females (Titus 2:3-5), and often receive the gift of prophesy (Acts 21:9, Judges 4:4). Yet despite all of this, the bible tells us to not place women in an authority over, or in a teaching capacity to, men in the congregation (I Corinthians 14:34, I Timothy 2:12). Now why would the bible do this, given all the amazing and powerful accounts of women in the scriptures? In II Chronicles 34 for example, when the long lost Book of the Law had been found, King Josiah sent his messengers to speak with a woman named Huldah, on what the Lord wanted them to do. And not only did he hear the prophetic words of Huldah, King Josiah gathered all the elders, men, inhabitants, priests and Levites, then made some decrees based on what she said. So to say Huldah indirectly instructed Josiah's Kingdom would be an understatement (she did so much more), yet we are still instructed to teach men with other men. The bible does this, to challenge men toward accepting the role God has given them and be ready for the responsibilities of being a man. This has little to do with what a woman is, or is not, capable of doing. So our stance on women teaching in the congregation, is aligned with our instructions from the Brit Chadashah (New Testament), which says for women to refrain from teaching, or having authority over men in the congregation, to encourage our males to accept their spiritual responsibilities. And keep in mind that this does not subtract from women's equal citizenship with Messiah, ability to teach in small groups, capability to instruct younger females, adeptness with children's ministries and amazing gift of prophesy. . . .¹³

When I read the statement about Huldah, "to say Huldah indirectly instructed Josiah's Kingdom would be an understatement (she did so much more), yet we are still instructed to teach men with other men," I detect that the leaders of this independent Messianic group would privately like to see females in much greater positions of teaching and leadership, yet they have concluded that the Apostolic Writings are limiting of it. I would suspect that there are many people within today's Messianic movement, who feel the same way. They know that God uses women the same as men, but that because of certain Bible passages, that women cannot be used to the same degree as men in positions of leadership and teaching.

People who are engaged with some of the theological discussions and debates, particularly in evangelical Protestantism, from the past four to five decades, know that one cannot just refer off hand to 1 Timothy 2:12 or 1

¹³ Messiah Echad. (n.d.). *What is your stance on women teaching in the congregation?* Retrieved 22 December, 2017, from <<http://messiahechad.org/faq>>.

Corinthians 14:34-35, regarding the place of women in the assembly. Complementarian interpreters who are negative to women occupying positions of leadership in the *ekklēsia*, recognize that there are situation-specific issues in both of these passages. Conservative egalitarian interpreters, recognize that 1 Timothy 2:12 has translation issues, and that there are textual debates involving the authenticity of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35.

It is undeniable that when I have evaluated some of the evangelical Protestant discussions on men and women in the Body of Messiah—in particular regarding men and women serving as co-leaders in the assembly, and husbands and wives as co-leaders of the family—that today’s Messianic movement has some *unique homespun challenges*. Because we do believe in some continuance of the Torah or Law of Moses, some are inclined to want to establish a Twenty-First Century quasi-patriarchy, rather than interpret some Torah instructions contextually for Ancient Israel *first*, before deducing some modern applications. Many of the instructions witnessed in the Torah, were actually case laws intended for Ancient Israel because of circumstances that arose for this burgeoning nation in the Ancient Near East. The bodies of Jewish literature and *halachah* from the Second Temple period and immediately afterward, bear significant witness to how Judaism has wrestled with applying ancient instructions, for later time periods.

As we approach various Messianic questions surrounding men and women, our purpose cannot be to evaluate all of the internal family decisions that husbands and wives need to make regarding their different responsibilities, their economic disposition, or their sexual practices. Our purpose should be to evaluate whether or not the Messianic movement, as a whole, has mis-evaluated the Scriptural trajectory regarding what occurred between men and women as a result of the Fall, the restoration of such equality in the post-resurrection era, and the offenses and injustices which have been committed by a sufficient number of today’s Messianic leaders and teachers by relegating females to a secondary place in the assembly and in the home. Discussions on men and women in the Body of Messiah, must also not overlook some of the discrimination which single people have had to endure—but we will leave that issue for another time...