

# OIM UPDATE

April 2012

This time of the year is especially meaningful for those who pursue and serve the Holy One of Israel, from a Messianic perspective, because of the fuller understanding that is derived from studying and appreciating His Word from Genesis to Revelation. Although many in their previous religious affiliations may have been taught about some sort of connection between the ancient flight of the Israelites and the sacrifice of Yeshua the Messiah—there is now a more profound comprehension, about how the Torah instructions line up with the testimonies found in the Gospels and Acts, when one makes the effort to honor and keep the Passover. Whether it is understanding the first fruits wave offering, or avoiding leaven, or Counting the Omer, or commemorating the Feast of Weeks (*Shavuot*)—it is a joy for Messianic Believers to not just read or talk about theoretical concepts, or think about what the Jewish people might be doing—but to actively participate in the Lord’s instructions for all His people.

While specifically contemplating the resurrection of the Messiah recently, I was repeatedly prompted to focus on the “hope of glory,” which is to be surely implanted in the hearts and minds of the redeemed *in Him*. Hence, this month’s lead article has been entitled, “**Hope of Glory.**” I talk not only about the relevance of following the instructions of the Lord, but most critically, the absolute need for men and women to be born from above and indwelt with the Holy Spirit. Hopefully in this season of Counting the Omer—which will lead us to *Shavuot* or Pentecost, when it is customary for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to be proclaimed and remembered—we will each be prompted to have not only thankfulness for our salvation, but be inspired to continue to boldly proclaim the gospel without reservation!

To help accommodate your desire to draw closer to the Lord, or perhaps help explain to others why you and your family are participating in what many have thought were only for His people in “Old Testament times”—we have several publications that you will find very useful. These include the *Messianic Spring Holiday Helper* and *Counting the Omer* devotional, which are available in both paperback and eBook from Amazon Kindle. This past month, we have seen a wonderful response on Amazon Kindle, for these seasonal items. We are rapidly climbing to the top of the “favorites” lists. We praise the Lord for the exposure we have had through these venues! We are working as diligently as we can to make more titles available, for the issues facing our broad Messianic community, and the questions that many people are definitely asking.

Finally, we have had a disappointing turn of events on our house sale due to the vagaries of the Florida real estate market. While we still have a person interested in purchasing our house this Fall, the recent contract fell through due to circumstances beyond our control. We are asking that you continue praying that the Lord will intervene to make our move a reality in His perfect timing!

Thank you for your continued support of our efforts to serve the Holy One of Israel. May the Lord bless you mightily as you have blessed us! Mark Huey

# HOPE OF GLORY

by Mark Huey

For the Messianic community of faith, the Spring holiday season is especially meaningful, and for some, perhaps life-altering. This is a time when many of our Christian brothers and sisters get significantly exposed to the Messianic movement, largely by being invited to different Passover *seders* and presentations hosted by some congregations and ministries. Likewise, because of the importance that the Passover holiday has for all people of faith—in association with the redemptive work of Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ)—this is a special time for all of us to evaluate where we stand before the Lord, and consider how we have grown and matured in Him from the previous Passover.

In His infinite wisdom, the Lord understood the propensity for humanity to follow the ways of its flesh. In order to redirect Israel's focus toward Him, He prescribed a remedy for this inherent malady that has served generations of people, who faithfully obey the instructions to remember Him from the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread, through the Counting of the Omer to the commemoration of *Shavuot*. This is a wonderful time for each of us to reorient our thoughts and ways toward the Almighty, and enrich our walks with Yeshua. Particularly, if one is able to make the connection that these activities foreshadow the coming of Yeshua—the Messiah as the Passover Lamb, slain, buried, and resurrected for us—to be followed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon those assembled to observe the Feast of Weeks, there are potential blessings and enrichment for born again Believers. But as always, unless individuals make the necessary effort *to obey these instructions*, which are for all generations (Leviticus 23:14, 21), the possible spiritual benefits will not materialize.

During the period of these Spring appointed times, many Messianic Believers continue the annual trek through the weekly Torah portions. During the approximate two months from Passover to *Shavuot*, those who are systematically studying the Torah, on the one year cycle, are concentrating their attention on the Book of Leviticus, where the ten readings largely emphasize instructions given to the Levitical priesthood, and how they were to offer different sacrifices in the ancient Tabernacle. It is in these readings that students are frequently reminded of the presence of the “glory of the Lord” in and around the Tabernacle, carried with the Ancient Israelites, during their desert sojourn. Of course, the theme of God dwelling with His people, and manifesting His great glory, is not at all limited to the Torah. The remainder of the Tanakh, and the Apostolic Writings, both give us important information about how His presence is to be manifested not just in a grand Tabernacle serviced by the Levites—but in the very hearts and minds of the faithful themselves.

The ancient prophecy of Ezekiel was that as part of the New Covenant God would make with His people, He would give them a new heart of flesh. The Holy Spirit would also be definitively present, to compel and stir on obedience in a way never really present before:

“Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances” (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

In his instruction to the Colossians, the Apostle Paul would elaborate on how “God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Messiah in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27). Having the presence of the Messiah, in one’s heart and mind, was not only something to be given to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—but people of all nations, who can understand God’s great plan for His Creation!

Emboldened and empowered by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, Messianic Believers can use a complete understanding of the Spring appointed times, to unashamedly proclaim the good news of the atoning work of the Messiah and His resurrection—without any concern of rejection or that their claims are in vain (1 Corinthians 15:12-20). Yeshua the Messiah did not just come randomly, and be condemned as a criminal, as someone we should all just feel sorry for and consider for His philosophical sayings that promote some kind of universal peace. He came as the Lamb of God, foretold by the Tanakh Scriptures (Old Testament), to bring all to eternal redemption. He came so that the saved in Him might be filled with the Holy Spirit. As the Apostle Peter would testify to those assembled in Jerusalem for *Shavuot* or the Day of Pentecost,

“Men of Israel, listen to these words: Yeshua the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power...This Yeshua God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear” (Acts 2:22-24, 32-33).

## Nicodemus Transformation

A man or woman must be born from above (John 3:16) and indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4), before he or she can even begin to comprehend spiritual realities. Paul specifies how one must be “spiritual,” and have the “mind of the Messiah,” in order to more fully understand the mysteries of God:

“Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God predestined before the ages to our glory; *the wisdom* which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but just as it is written, ‘THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND

EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND *which* HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM [Isaiah 64:4; 52:15].’ For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the *thoughts* of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. 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 2:6-16).

In this passage, Paul makes a stark comparison between worldly wisdom and godly wisdom. Such godly wisdom is something that is only obtainable and understandable by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. A man or woman must be born again *and* indwelt by the Spirit of God, in order to even begin to comprehend the mysteries of God’s plan for the ages. Faithfully studying the Torah and obediently participating in the appointed times, while highly recommended and something that is surely good—is simply not enough to acquire the mind of Messiah, and a relationship that insures eternal life.

In a frequently considered passage, found in the Gospel of John, we find that even a learned and assuredly wise Torah teacher like Nicodemus could not fathom the concept of being born from above—because he depended on his human wisdom, rather what could only be appraised spiritually. Despite his stature as an acknowledged ruler of the Jews, when he came to Yeshua in the dark of the night, little did he know that the Holy Spirit was wooing him into a fuller understanding of what the Messiah was destined to accomplish:

“Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; this man came to Yeshua by night and said to Him, ‘Rabbi, we know that You have come from God *as* a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.’ Yeshua answered and said to him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?’ Yeshua answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I said to you, “You must be born again.” The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.’ Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can these things be?’ Yeshua answered and said to him, ‘Are you the teacher of Israel

**and do not understand these things?** Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony. If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man. **As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life”** (John 3:1-16).

Clearly in this unique encounter, the spiritual truths boldly stated to Nicodemus by Yeshua must have been confusing to the natural mind of Nicodemus, as the dialogue suggests. But the fact that Yeshua referenced a well known incident recorded in the Torah, must have made quite a lasting impression on the learned Nicodemus desperately seeking truth. As a teacher, Nicodemus had probably been through the Torah multiple times, and perhaps had even taught his students many lessons about the incident that occurred in Ancient Israel's desert sojourn after the great victory over the Canaanites near Mount Hor. Here, one finds that the Lord responded favorably to the pleas of the Israelites by delivering up the marauding Canaanites to defeat. But, the impatience of the disgruntled Israelites resulted in some Divine punishment being administered by fiery serpents:

“When the Canaanite, the king of Arad, who lived in the Negev, heard that Israel was coming by the way of Atharim, then he fought against Israel and took some of them captive. **So Israel made a vow to the LORD and said, ‘If You will indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities.’** The LORD heard the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites; then they utterly destroyed them and their cities. Thus the name of the place was called Hormah. Then they set out from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient because of the journey. The people spoke against God and Moses, ‘Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this miserable food. **The LORD sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died.** So the people came to Moses and said, ‘We have sinned, because we have spoken against the LORD and you; intercede with the LORD, that He may remove the serpents from us.’ And Moses interceded for the people. Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Make a fiery *serpent*, and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live.’ **And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived”** (Numbers 21:1-9).

Despite the deaths of many Israelites, the Lord in His mercy gave Moses an antidote for the sting of the serpent bites, which required a faithful response from those being bitten. Moses fashioned a bronze serpent and set it up as a standard for the people to look upon in order to live.

In many regards, this incident in the desert was simply foreshadowing the eventual crucifixion, when Yeshua would be lifted up on an execution-stake in order to become a substitution for the consequences of human sin. There is little doubt that when Nicodemus witnessed, or heard, of the sacrifice of Yeshua, that he had some kind of spiritual transformation. He should have recalled the intimate conversation he had with Yeshua, that riveted in his mind, given the obvious connection between the bronze serpent being lifted up and the Messiah's body hung on a tree. Thankfully for Nicodemus, the Gospel account confirms that at some point during this bloody ordeal, Nicodemus must have come to fully trust in what transpired, with Yeshua offering permanent atonement at Golgotha, as he is mentioned as part of the burial party:

"Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds *weight*. So they took the body of Yeshua and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. Therefore because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was nearby, they laid Yeshua there" (John 19:39-42).

As you have just remembered the Passover—connecting the sacrifice of Yeshua the Messiah to the lamb that was to be slain, *and* hopefully now recalling some things about Nicodemus—perhaps you might want to contemplate and consider when or how your own personal spiritual transformation occurred. After all, what was necessary for Nicodemus, the Apostles, and the original followers of the Messiah in the First Century remains the same today. Remembering your personal encounter with the Creator God, of when you encountered the gospel message and responded to the call of salvation, should serve as sure motivation for you to continue to pursue Him and His righteousness! Recollecting Yeshua, high and lifted up as the sacrifice for your sins, and then reveling in the fact that He was resurrected from the dead and now sits at the right hand of the Father ready to return to Earth—should encourage you to want to serve Him!

Nothing has changed regarding the requirement to be born from above and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. I sincerely hope that you have had a moment in time when the reality of your sin was so profound, that you called upon the Lord for salvation (Psalm 55:16; Acts 2:36-38). Then, just like Nicodemus and countless others down through the ages—who have been born again and indwelt with the Holy Spirit—you now have a responsibility to share the good news of the Messiah's sacrifice for sin with others. During this special Spring season, be recommitted to a life of holiness, as the Lord compels you to accomplish good works of love and mercy for others! Perhaps some of you have already done this by inviting guests to your Passover table. Or, perhaps some of you need to truly make sure that you are filled up with His grace, as you consider your attitude toward your fellow human beings—who are in need of redemption and admonition the same as you once were.

## Hope of Glory

The Apostle Paul wrote a great deal of instructions in his epistles, which address not only the mysteries of God, but what he describes as the “hope of glory.” In this particular passage from his letter to the Colossians, Paul defines a mystery that is so profound, that one must be spiritually alive to even understand what he is declaring:

**“Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the assembly, in filling up what is lacking in Messiah’s afflictions. Of *this [assembly]* I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the *preaching of the word of God, that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Messiah in you, the hope of glory.* We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Messiah. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me”** (Colossians 1:24-29).

Here, we have the testimony of an Apostle who states unequivocally that the “hope of glory” is literally *the Messiah in you*. If you take some time to consider the truth that the Lord has absolutely taken up residence inside of your heart, you should be overwhelmed with not only thankfulness—but a sincere love for Him in what He has done for you! If the Messiah is truly in you, then you will appreciate another loving admonition by Paul, delivered to the Philippians:

**“So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Messiah I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain”** (Philippians 2:12-16).

May we each make this Spring season a time to be all that the Father has destined us to be—as we serve Him to do His will and to work for His good pleasure! Do not just imagine, but instead *realize and embrace* the fact that the Messiah in you is the hope of glory!

**Least in the Kingdom:** What does it mean to be “least in the Kingdom”?

There is a variance of interpretations in the Messianic movement regarding what being “least of the Kingdom” means. In Matthew 5:19, Yeshua the Messiah says,

“Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others *to do* the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” What we may assume from these words is that one’s status in the Kingdom of God can be determined by how one handles or approaches the Torah or Law of Moses. If one teaches the Torah, and encourages others to keep its commandments, that person will be considered great in the Kingdom. If one teaches against the Torah and its commandments, that person will be considered the least.

One of the most sobering words from our Lord comes in Matthew 13:41-42, speaking of His return. Yeshua says that when He returns, “The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” He also says, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS’” (Matthew 7:21-23; cf. Psalm 6:8).

These references to lawlessness, or *anomia* (ἀνομία), are references to those who deny the place of the Torah in their lives. Some have interpreted being “least” in the Kingdom as not being in the Kingdom at all. Unfortunately, there are some in the Messianic community who make it their job to judge the salvation of many who are not pursuing a Torah observant lifestyle as *they* are. **It is not our job as limited human beings to judge the eternal salvation of anyone.** But, it is our job to take the words of the Messiah very seriously. If we are not pursuing compliance with what He has told us concerning the Torah, then what is going to happen? The Torah is God’s standard of what He considers acceptable and unacceptable. If we are not pursuing an acceptable lifestyle, then are we in rebellion to God? Are we making ourselves out to be God?

The Messiah attaches rewards to those who keep the commandments of the Torah and teach them to others, and penalties to those who do not keep the commandments and teach others to break them. The word

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“least” or *elachistos* (ἐλάχιστος) is of importance here, as it “**pert. to being considered of very little importance, insignificant, trivial**” (BDAG).<sup>a</sup> What does this mean? Does it mean that many who have taught that the Torah is no longer to be followed are going to be given few rewards in the Kingdom? Again, it is *not our place* to judge the status of anyone, but we must heed the Lord’s words and endeavor to follow His admonitions.

Being “least in the Kingdom” can definitely be taken as a word concerning one’s status in the Kingdom, in terms of being given few rewards and accolades. We need to all remember, though, how one’s status in the Kingdom of God is ultimately determined by only God Himself. He is the final Judge of all human beings.

### **Dreams and Visions: What is your position on dreams and visions?**

Joel 2:28 clearly tells us that in the Last Days the Lord will pour out His Spirit upon “all flesh/mankind,” but yet we also know that there will be intense deception and apostasy. Many have claimed to see visions, dreams, give prophecies, etc. of the Last Days outside that of the Biblical canon. Unfortunately for such individuals, most extra-Biblical prophecies of the end-times statistically do not come to pass, and many espoused “dreams or visions from God” are not Scripturally sound.

While we do believe that God will pour out His Spirit on His people, we question many of those who claim to have prophetic dreams or visions. When someone’s dream or vision does not come to pass as a person predicts, that person may claim to have had another vision in which the Lord “showed them” that predicted events would occur on another date on which nothing happens.

Many get into the pattern of believing that every dream that they have at night is prophetic, which we should highly question. We have serious reservations when dealing with those who claim to have dreams or visions, as many regard their prophecies to be at the level of, or even above the Bible, **which is highly dangerous.**

We as Believers have enough Bible prophecy to concern ourselves with in Scripture itself; we do not need additional “revelation.” Most dreams are simply mental digestion of what people are thinking and have nothing to do with prophecy.

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<sup>a</sup> BDAG, 314.

# KOSHER YOUR PLATE

*edited by Margaret McKee Huey*

It is my intention to bring our Messianic cooks timely recipes of interest in each issue of the OIM News. In this issue, I have included two wonderful dessert recipes!

## Cherry Sheet Cake

2 cans tart cherries (drain one can)  
1 box yellow cake mix  
1 stick melted butter  
1-teaspoon almond extract

In a 9" x 12" pan, dump the cherries on the bottom and mix in the almond extract. Next, dump the dry cake mix on top of the cherries. Mix and blend all ingredients together. Drizzle butter on top on the cake mixture. Bake at 350 degrees for about 30 minutes until the top begins to brown. Wonderful treat!

## Coconut Pound Cake

1-cup shortening  
2-cups granulated sugar  
5 eggs  
2-cups flour  
1 can (3 ½ oz) flaky coconut  
1 ½-teaspoon baking powder  
1-teaspoon salt  
1-cup buttermilk  
1 ½-teaspoon coconut flavoring

Cream shortening and sugar. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each one. Sift dry ingredients and add alternately with buttermilk to creamed sugar mixture. Add coconut flavoring and can of coconut. Bake in a greased and floured stem pan in a preheated 350-degree oven for 50-60 minutes. Glaze cake with following: Boil 1-cup sugar and ½ cup water and cook for 2 minutes. Add 1 teaspoon coconut flavoring. Brush glaze over top while it is still hot and in pan.

*Please submit your recipes to Margaret Huey at the OIM office for inclusion in this column and our upcoming cookbook "Kosher Your Plate."*