

OIM UPDATE

April 2015

Now that Spring is in full bloom, after the Feast of Unleavened Bread has purged our bodies of yeast, the fifty day Counting of the Omer to *Shavuot* proceeds. This year our twenty-three year old daughter Maggie, who has been “Messianic” since she was three, came home from graduate school for the last time before her upcoming wedding, to be held on the Feast of Weeks. During her visit, we discussed her current studies and she reminded me of her article published in the **OU Historical Journal - Issue 3, Spring 2014** that she wrote as an undergraduate her final senior semester. Needless to say, the article reflected her combined love of British history with her passion for Jewish evangelism, a significant subject she wants to concentrate on for her master’s degree:

Maggie McKee-Huey's “The Role and Impact of Jewish Evangelism in Nineteenth Century Great Britain: The London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews.” provides insight to causes of the movement of Christian evangelism amongst the Jewish population in nineteenth century London. Breaking down barriers of prejudice and anti-Semitism, the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews (LSPCJ) radically transformed the negative perception the Anglican Church had of the Jewish people; igniting a burning passion to spread the Gospel to Jews in London. McKee-Huey's sophisticated analysis of the history of the LSPCJ, and its impact on both the Jewish and Anglican communities, creates a solid foundation for comprehending the Zionist and other later movements to convert Jews in London. —Brooke Hamilton

Providentially, while our conversation centered on her academic aspirations, I was reminded of the personal research I was conducting on Zionism, and the incredible prophetic survival of the State of Israel—especially in light of the current travails in the Middle East and recent Israeli elections. As my examination into the history of Zionism continued, I was led to read about Christian Zionism and the unique role which Christians have had in promoting some of the many Biblical prophecies that include the return of the Jewish people to the Promised Land. One book that really caught my attention in particular, written by Alexander Keith, a British theologian, was the 1844 title *The Land of Israel According to the Covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*. As a result, I have been prompted to write this month’s lead article entitled, “**Longsuffering Limitations.**” It is my intention that this will encourage you to be patient with how our Heavenly Father is implementing His plans for the Creation.

This month many of you are going to turn to one of our two books to help you Count the Omer in preparation for the Feast of Weeks. These include the devotionals *Counting the Omer: A Daily Devotional Toward Shavuot* and *Sayings of the Fathers: A Messianic Perspective on the Pirkei Avot*, both of which are available in paperback and eBook for Amazon Kindle.

Finally, please remember that Outreach Israel Ministries and TNN Online are dedicated to serving the Lord in our capacity to reach, teach, encourage, and disciple today's Messianic people with our many written resources. Your faithful contributions to the **Theological Defense Trust** and the **Prison Ministry Free Book Fund** help us achieve our many goals, to continue providing these life-changing materials that are being used by the Lord to advance His Kingdom on Earth, until the Messianic restoration of all things. Thank you for your financial and prayerful support of our efforts!

“May the LORD bless you, and keep you; the LORD make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace” (Numbers 6:24-26).

Chag Sameach and Shalom,
Mark Huey

LONGSUFFERING LIMITATIONS

by Mark Huey

In recent weeks, months, and even years, there has been a considerable amount of angst among both Jewish and Christian followers of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob about the precarious position the State of Israel has in the global community. In particular, attention is riveted on Israel's eroding relationship with the United States of America. For the first time since the declaration of statehood by the pioneers of the Jewish state in 1948, other than the tenuous times in the 1950s during the Eisenhower administration over Egypt and the Suez Canal, there is an openly, publicized gap in the rapport between the American President and Israeli Prime Minister. This significant breach in relations has forced many to their knees for mercy and understanding.

For modern-day prognosticators, and even some Biblical historians, there is a genuine concern about the ramifications of a national leader turning a blind eye to Israel. This apprehension is primarily based on an often cited interpretation of Genesis 12:3, "And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." The Messianic prophetic significance of the closing statement in these verses, is that in Abraham's seed, Yeshua, all of the families of the Earth will be blessed. However, there is considerable theorizing about the timing of circumstances and even some apocalyptic events, based on how Abraham's offspring are treated by others. The simplified conclusion offered by many is this: **If a country or national leader, or even an individual person, blesses the descendants of Abraham (Israel), then whichever "blessing" entity will be blessed. Contrary to this, if one or the other entity curses the Jewish people or the State of Israel, then they will likewise be cursed.**

This axiomatic formula has some historical reasons for existing, because hindsight can approach 20/20 vision and understanding. But absolute predictions about the magnitude or timing of blessings or curses to come *cannot* be derived because of the ambiguity of the Creator's longsuffering nature, which has no self-imposed time constraints. In addition, the Holy One of Israel has typically down through the ages chosen to use human vessels, with some occasional supernatural interventions, to accomplish His purposes on Earth. But once again, there are no categorical governing parameters upon the sovereign will of the God of Creation. After all, He is an infinite God, who finite creatures (looking through a glass

darkly—1 Corinthians 13:12) with nominal success, are attempting to comprehend. So with those assertions in mind, the Father occasionally uses different circumstances to reveal more about Himself and His ways. Consequently, the following confluence of events has led me to personally consider His attribute of longsuffering and how limitations are part of His plan.

While recently doing some research on Christian Zionism, I read a fascinating book written in 1844 by Alexander Keith, entitled, *The Land of Israel According to the Covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*. The more I read this book, I discovered that Keith, a Scottish theologian, had an extraordinary comprehension of the ancient prophecies found in the Bible that made him come to the absolute conclusion that it was time (1844) for the Jewish people to return to the Promised Land. His argument was simply based on the Holy Scriptures and God's unilateral covenants to the Patriarchs, coupled with what was communicated to the Prophets of Israel. The book really resonated with my heart, because of a passage from Leviticus 26, which years ago in my personal Torah studies, revealed a Scriptural prescription that defined a solution on how Israel is to return to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:

“If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me—I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies—or if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity, **then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land.** For the land will be abandoned by them, and will make up for its sabbaths while it is made desolate without them. They, meanwhile, will be making amends for their iniquity, because they rejected My ordinances and their soul abhorred My statutes. **Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God.** But I will remember for them the covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am the LORD.” These are the statutes and ordinances and laws which the LORD established between Himself and the sons of Israel through Moses at Mount Sinai” (Leviticus 26:40-46).

As I concluded this thought provoking book, I could not help but wonder why the Lord had tarried for over one hundred years before He allowed the reconstitution of the State of Israel in 1948, given that books like Keith's and others were being circulated among Christian theologians

and laypersons for over a century.

Then “coincidentally,” while doing some additional research on Zionism, I became engaged in a conversation with my daughter about her graduate school progress that included a thesis she wrote on “The London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews,” an evangelistic society formed in 1809. As I contemplated my examination of Christian Zionism—some of the books I was reading, my conversation with my daughter, coupled with the increasing turmoil in the Middle East and recent Israeli elections—I was led to seek further comprehension about what the Father was doing at this rather precarious point in time. The more I researched and read, the more I was somewhat flabbergasted by the realization that there were godly people in the early and mid-Nineteenth Century, who were writing about the return of the Jews to Palestine to reclaim the Land of Promise, simply because the overwhelming testimony of the ancient prophecies indicated the inevitability of such return. This perplexion led me to read another book that concentrated on the historical testimonies of a number of Christian theologians, politicians, and businessmen from Great Britain, and what they had done since the Seventeenth Century to help the Jewish people return home. *The Vision Was There: A History of the British Movement for the Restoration of the Jews to Palestine*, written by a German Jew named Franz Kobler in 1956, summarized much of what had been done by Christians from Great Britain, and how they were actively promoting the return of the Jewish people to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

As I queried the Holy Spirit for insight, the two words that began to percolate in my mind were “longsuffering and limitation.” In my mediation on these words, I first realized that by His very nature, the Holy One of Israel is slow to anger or longsuffering:

“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

Additionally, because the Almighty desires all of humanity to “come to repentance” and acknowledge its need for the Savior’s blood sacrifice to atone for sin, transgression, and iniquity—He has chosen to limit Himself to achieve many of His purposes for the Creation through human agents, like the Patriarchs, the Prophets of Israel, and the Apostles. After all, it is through the trials and tribulations of life challenges and issues that people should come to a knowledge of their inadequacies before a righteous and holy Creator God. But, to come to the end of human ability, which widely considers itself “godlike,” can take considerable time and circumstances. Hence, God’s longsuffering desire for human repentance, coupled with individual need to place trust in the blood atonement provided by the

sacrificial Lamb, Yeshua, takes time, and requires an individual volitional response to the free offer of salvation.

This line of thinking led me to take a detailed look at the word “longsuffering,” in the Bible and I was drawn to one of the Lord’s personal descriptions of Himself found in Exodus 34:6-7:

“Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, **slow to anger** [longsuffering, KJV/NKJV], and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave *the guilty* unpunished, **visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations**” (Exodus 34:6-7).

However, as I read and reread the passage—and considered the wisdom of the Jewish Sages who have described a traditional “thirteen attributes of God” from these verses—the conclusion that God would “**by no means leave *the guilty* unpunished,**” caught my attention. This was reminiscent of the Second Commandment that forbids worshipping idols, and the negative consequences of idol worship versus the positive consequences to those who love God and keep His commandments:

“You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. **You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,** but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments” (Exodus 20:4-6).

The contrast between the residual effects of disobedience to the third and fourth generation, versus the blessing of lovingkindness to thousands, led me to take a further look at the context of what was written in Exodus 34. Here, one finds that Moses was commanded to personally hew two new stone tablets, to replace the first two fashioned by God that were shattered when Moses returned from Mount Sinai the first time, and found Israel in a riotous orgy, worshipping the golden calf (Exodus 31:18-32:20). We see that God was not going to supply the two tablets, but Moses would be personally responsible for providing stones tablets for God to rewrite the Ten Words (Commandments) upon:

“**Now the LORD said to Moses, ‘Cut out for yourself two stone tablets like the former ones, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the former tablets which you shattered.** So be ready by morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself there to Me on the top of the mountain. No man is to come up with you, nor let any man be seen anywhere on the mountain; even the flocks and the herds

may not graze in front of that mountain.' So he cut out two stone tablets like the former ones, and Moses rose up early in the morning and went up to Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and he took two stone tablets in his hand. The LORD descended in the cloud and stood there with him as he called upon the name of the LORD. Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave *the guilty* unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations" (Exodus 34:1-7).

This time reading through the passage and focusing upon Moses' responsibility to provide the stone tablets, a completely different impression of the Holy One of God came forth when His self-description of His attributes were listed. Now this loving, compassionate, gracious, longsuffering, full of lovingkindness and truth Creator God, reminds Moses of His willingness to forgive iniquity, transgression, and sin. **But there is one major caveat.** The Sovereign God of the Universe, because of His righteousness and eternal nature being a perfectly just God—although He does not execute judgment upon people for their transgressions at the exact moment the iniquity or sin is committed—**does state that there will be residual consequences.** The Holy One of Israel's righteousness requires Him to eventually punish the guilty, unless confessed and repented, and then visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation. Hence, there is a need for a substitute that atones for sin, whether it is ancient animal sacrifices, or the blood of the Savior Yeshua. For the Scriptures clearly state in the Torah of Moses that,

"[T]he life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement" (Leviticus 17:11).

This need for blood atonement is repeated in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in the fuller explanation that Yeshua's sacrifice is what people need to place their faith upon:

"And according to the Law, *one may almost say*, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9:22).

Exodus 34:7 makes a strong statement about what can be termed "generational curses," alluded to in this passage as, "visiting the iniquity of the parents upon the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation" (34:7, NRSV). Does this conflict with the Torah passage which states that each person is responsible for his or her own sin?

“Fathers shall not be put to death for *their* sons, nor shall sons be put to death for *their* fathers; everyone shall be put to death for his own sin” (Deuteronomy 24:16).

The answer is no, because people are not responsible for the sin of others. The transgressions, iniquities, and sin which deserve capital punishment are not placed upon the next of kin. But because God cannot wink at sin and pretend it has not occurred, there are residual consequences to the offspring of transgressors. This is particularly the case in iniquities like spousal or child abuse, or addictions to alcohol or drugs, and many other sins which can be passed down from generation to generation, because of the modeling that occurs *until* it is broken by confession, prayer, and repentance.

A good example of how these generational curses can be severed is found in Psalm 103:8-18, where the Psalmist not only reminds the reader of God's nature from Exodus 34:6, but that as a compassionate Heavenly Father, He has removed iniquities as far as from the east to the west:

“The LORD is compassionate and gracious, *slow to anger* and abounding in lovingkindness. He will not always strive *with us*, nor will He keep *His anger* forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. Just as a father has compassion on *his* children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him. For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are *but* dust. As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. When the wind has passed over it, it is no more, and its place acknowledges it no longer. But the lovingkindness of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, to those who keep His covenant and remember His precepts to do them” (Psalm 103:8-18).

The history of human civilization lumbers along at the deliberate sovereign pace of the Father, given man's responsibility to seek His forgiveness and confess the iniquities mentioned in Leviticus 26 above—the failure for doing so being *a cause of delay* for the will and purposes of the Almighty. The constraints of a longsuffering sovereign God limiting Himself to use human instruments to accomplish His will, tends to draw things out over a much longer period of time. Hence, the lengthy wait from the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. to the reconstitution of the State of Israel in 1948. Waiting for the many prophecies about the return of Israel to the Promised Land, although known for millennia, has not expedited the ultimate return and complete restoration and turning to God that is found in some of Moses' final words to Ancient Israel:

“So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call *them* to mind in all nations where the LORD your God has banished you, **and you return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons**, then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back. The LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. **Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live**” (Deuteronomy 30:1-6).

Some of the restoring and gathering aspects of this prophecy have been fulfilled since the Nineteenth Century and the Zionist movement, which culminated in the birth of the State of Israel in 1948 (Isaiah 66:8). However, Believers today are still patiently praying for and waiting for the hearts of many modern-day Israelis, who currently reside in *Eretz Yisrael*, to be circumcised by the Holy One, so that they will once again return to the Lord God and obey Him with all their hearts. At such a future point in time, many of the unfulfilled prophecies will be completed.

We should all be thankful for the Lord's longsuffering nature and His self-imposed limitations, which place responsibility upon humanity to respond to His loving instructions. After all, it is from the Sacred Texts that one discovers how people have the opportunity and requirement to by faith: confess, seek forgiveness, and repent, in order to have a loving relationship with the Creator God. Perhaps this is why at the end of the Book of Revelation when the Messiah tells the Apostle John that He is going to come quickly, John responds with **“Come, Lord Yeshua!”** (Revelation 22:20). For most assuredly, for every follower of the Messiah, there is that great expectation that Yeshua's eventual return will accelerate the fulfillment of *all* of the prophecies that point to the End of the Age, and the coming of the New Heavens and New Earth. The ultimate fulfillment of prophecy, that even now generates in the hearts and minds of Believers, is the joyous exclamation, **“Maranatha, Messiah Yeshua, come quickly, Amen!”**

TNN ONLINE EDITOR'S UPDATE

April 2015

Dear Friends:

I have presently completed the notes on our 1 Corinthians Wednesday Night Bible Study through ch. 6, and am steadily working through the many



Bible passages slotted for the forthcoming *Messianic Sabbath Helper*. (You never go in the order listed of these passages; you tend to instead work through the smaller passages first!) This month we are pleased to announce the formal release of the five-chapter excerpt *Shabbat: Sabbath for Messianic Believers*, with the larger *Sabbath Helper* due sometime in the Fall.

The past few weeks have been a bit “probing” for me personally. I have been reflecting a great deal on my having started seminary ten years ago, the developments I have gone through personally and ministerially since then, and some new venues I have opened up for interacting with Messianic people. This has forced me to think through some of the things which make me substantially “different,” as I would not be an avid writer and researcher, if I did not believe that some needs were not being met.

As I have been thinking through and witnessing various things, today’s broad Messianic movement is very much locked-in to a 1980s vintage style of ministry. In its apologetics, in defense of core issues, the term “heresy” gets thrown around far too frequently—normally to those with whom some substantial disagreement is present. People holding to particular kinds of eschatology, for example, could be “heretics.” I have a much more targeted usage of the term “heresy”; **I only use it to describe what I consider to be definite salvation issues.** I do consider those who believe that Yeshua is a created being to be heretics; I do not consider pre-tribulationists to be heretics. I would instead consider them to be misguided, having misinterpreted or misapplied various passages.

Recently, I setup a new Author page at [facebook.com/JKMMessianic](https://www.facebook.com/JKMMessianic) and Twitter account [@JKMMessianic](https://twitter.com/JKMMessianic). I definitely have my two fingers on the pulse of the Messianic world, and there will be a public way for people to see how I interact with others on the issues of the day! I am also able to see how demographically, the independent Messianic to Hebrew Roots sector, is conservatively ten times the size of Messianic Judaism. These are people, who for whatever reason or series of reasons, do not feel welcome in Messianic Jewish congregations. Perhaps it is because, as largely non-Jewish Believers, their presence has been treated as a means only of financial support, perhaps they have been patronized, or perhaps they have been discouraged from perusing a Torah obedient life.

I know that I do not like seeing people dismissed, who are putting a past of Christian anti-Semitism behind them, turning to their Jewish and Hebraic Roots in the Tanach, and are living a life more like Yeshua. *I want an inclusive Messianic movement, where all people will respect one another, and we will use our shared Jewish and Christian heritage for the betterment of God’s Kingdom.* I want to be a stabilizing influence among the people. I know we have many things to work through, as the 2000s vintage style of ministry I adhere to, does not focus on issuing position statements or white papers toward others—but instead focuses on explaining issues and detailing why certain views should be held via reasonable evidence. This of course takes time, patience, steadfastness, and a commitment to fairness.

Until next month... J.K. McKee