

Notes: January 3, 2015

Start: 10 AM

Order of service:

1. Meet and Greet
2. Introduction (if new people)
3. Ma Tovv
4. Open in Prayer for service
5. Liturgy – Sh'ma +
6. Announcements
7. Jeri - Drash
8. Praise and Worship Songs
9. Message
10. Aaronic Blessing
11. Kiddush
12. Oneg

Children's Blessing:

Transliteration: *Ye'simcha Elohim ke-Ephraim ve hee-Menashe*

English: *May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe*

Transliteration: *Ye'simech Elohim ke-Sarah, Rivka, Rachel ve-Leah.*

English: *May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.*

Introduction: “A Response to the Concerned Believer”

With the new year upon us, rather than do something new, I would do some review...

As I was preparing for this week's sermon, which usually comprises a composition of my thoughts over the week and then compiling them before service, I thought I would include a few experience that people shared with me this week.

Many of you have been challenged by others when you make mention of attending a Messianic Jewish Synagogue.

I can only speculate what the thought process is of those you talk with, but it might go something like this...

“I found this Messianic Jewish Synagogue I am attending, it is wonderful...

It is likely the first and only word they here in where you are attending is Jewish.

In playing the word association game where someone says a word and you say the first word that comes to mind...

I say up – you would say “down”

In a similar manner if I was to say Jewish, I would hope most of you would say Messiah...

Unfortunately, those that you speak with, when you would say Jewish, would likely say “law”

More times than not, in the mindset of believers, when they here the word Jewish, they immediately associate it with law. This has been conditioned in them for years, because the message that is conveyed is in contrast to it. I will share a few scriptures in a minute...

This is the mindset of many believers. I say this because of many conversations I have had with you, in the congregation when you come to me and share your experience in relating your attending this congregation with your believing friends.

Needless to say, the response isn't always a resounding Praise Adonai, but rather a response met with concern for your spiritual health and direction.

They are concerned you are placing yourself back under the law.

Which leads to a response from me - "how can you put yourself back under something if you were never under it to begin with?"

They will likely respond to you with verses such as:

Gal 3:28 there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor freeman, neither male nor female; for in union with the Messiah Yeshua, you are all one.

Rom 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. (KJV)

Rom 6:14 For sin will not have authority over you; because you are not under legalism but under grace.

Trying to convince you that what you are doing is not biblical.

The Law has been done away with, we are now under grace...

To the point, when someone shared their experience with their believing friends, they responded with Galatians 2:11 - 17

Gal 2:11 Furthermore, when Kefa came to Antioch, I opposed him publicly, because he was clearly in the wrong.

Gal 2:12 For prior to the arrival of certain people from *[the community headed by] Ya`akov*, he had been eating with the Gentile believers; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, because he was afraid of the faction who favored circumcising Gentile believers.

Gal 2:13 And the other Jewish believers became hypocrites along with him, so that even Bar-Nabba was led astray by their hypocrisy.

Gal 2:14 But when I saw that they were not walking a straight path, keeping in line with the truth of the Good News, I said to Kefa, right in front of everyone, "If you, who are a Jew, live like a Goy and not like a Jew, why are you forcing the Goyim to live like Jews?"

Gal 2:15 We are Jews by birth, not so-called 'Goyishe sinners';

Gal 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. (KJV)

Gal 2:16 even so, we have come to realize that a person is not declared righteous by God on the ground of his legalistic observance of Torah commands, but through the Messiah Yeshua's trusting faithfulness. Therefore, we too have put our trust in Messiah Yeshua and become faithful to him, in order that we might be declared

righteous on the ground of the Messiah's trusting faithfulness and not on the ground of our legalistic observance of Torah commands. For on the ground of legalistic observance of Torah commands, no one will be declared righteous.

Gal 2:17 But if, in seeking to be declared righteous by God through our union with the Messiah, we ourselves are indeed found to be sinners, then is the Messiah an aider and abettor of sin? Heaven forbid!

My own experience is that when people quote scripture to you, they are usually quoting it based on words and not context.

Not only that, but, and I say this with a heavy heart, the majority of believers don't even understand what they are quoting.

A verse I gave you earlier, when used to speak against you attending this congregation...

Gal 3:28 there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor freeman, neither male nor female; for in union with the Messiah Yeshua, you are all one.

There is neither Jew or Gentile, so what you are doing isn't biblical...why are you attending there...do you know what they are trying to do to you?

That is not what this verse is conveying at all.

We are one in Messiah, and no matter who you are, either by people group, status or gender.

This verse does not eliminate your identity, because if it did, I have news for you, no one in the room is either male or female either.

The message being conveyed throughout Scripture isn't one of elimination, but rather validation and improvement.

When we become a believer we are not eliminating the commandments and instructions of God but validating them.

When we become a believer, we receive atonement through Messiah, not a yearly sacrificial system.

Yet sin is still sin.

Rom 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. (KJV)

Consider Sha'ul's statement in Romans, keeping in mind that this comes after 6:14:

Rom 7:7 Therefore, what are we to say? That the Torah is sinful? Heaven forbid! Rather, the function of the Torah was that without it, I would not have known what sin is. For example, I would not have become conscious of what greed is if the Torah had not said, "Thou shalt not covet."

Rom 7:12 So the Torah is holy; that is, the commandment is holy, just and good.

Rom 7:13 Then did something good become for me the source of death? Heaven forbid! Rather, it was sin working death in me through something good, so that sin might be clearly exposed as sin, so that sin through the commandment might come to be experienced as sinful beyond measure.

Rom 7:14 For we know that the Torah is of the Spirit; but as for me, I am bound to the old nature, sold to sin as a slave.

Rom 7:15 I don't understand my own behavior — I don't do what I want to do; instead, I do the very thing I hate!

Torah isn't the issue, we are.

Yet, many are taught about grace in a manner that there is no law, but grace only.

Seems rather peculiar to me.

The emphasis is placed on grace, what about the other side of that statement?

So, if there is no law and only grace what does that imply?

No law = lawlessness

They will tell you that we are to follow the New Covenant, that is what we are bound to, not the law, given to the Jews.

This is hardly the message that Messiah conveys or Sha'ul writes about.

What are the 10 commandments? (9 actually when you are talking with your believing friends)

Are those not laws?

Are they not found in Torah?

In past messages I have shared with you many examples of Torah found in the New Covenant writings. Whether a direct reference or one that is alluded to, there are over 1300 references.

Yet they are conveying to you that you are no longer under the law, you are under grace.

This is how Stern's translates this verse...

Rom 6:14 For sin will not have authority over you; because you are not under legalism but under grace.

Consider another verse that is misunderstood and often misapplied:

Gal 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. (KJV)

Gal 2:16 even so, we have come to realize that a person is not declared righteous by God on the ground of his legalistic observance of Torah commands, but through the Messiah Yeshua's trusting faithfulness. Therefore, we too have put our trust in Messiah Yeshua and become faithful to him, in order that we might be declared righteous on the ground of the Messiah's trusting faithfulness and not on the ground of our legalistic observance of Torah commands. For on the ground of legalistic observance of Torah commands, no one will be declared righteous.

It is not about Torah, but about legalism.

What is legalism?

You will likely see many definitions, such as -

Theology - dependence on moral law rather than on personal religious faith.

Sounds like the opposite of grace, doesn't it?

Here is another definition - "excessive adherence to law or formula"

The second definition talks about excessive, in essence more than is required.

Legalism in its purest sense in relation to God, is creating more laws than are required by God Himself.

The legalism that is being conveyed in passages such as Galatians 2:16, involves the oral law, being followed by Jews and attempting to be imposed upon Gentile believers as if it is the same Torah.

In both cases, whether Jew or Gentile it is legalism.

I have told you before, that it is impossible for anyone here to keep all of Torah, not because the bar was made too high by God, but that it doesn't apply to everyone.

I have used these scriptures before...

Luk 1:5 In the days of Herod, King of Y'hudah, there was a cohen named Z'kharyah who belonged to the Aviyah division. His wife was a descendant of Aharon, and her name was Elisheva.

Luk 1:6 Both of them were righteous before God, observing all the mitzvot and ordinances of Adonai blamelessly.

Someone responded back to me, so what you are saying is that they don't need Yeshua?

My response was, that their righteousness was based on following Torah, according to what applied to them, including the sacrificial system, when they did transgress.

You need to be able to respond to them – why you attend. You need to be able to share scripture, addressing their points of concern, to anyone who challenges you.

Yeshua was constantly challenged and constantly conveyed His position through scripture.

Many who challenge you are likely ill-equipped to truly convey a proper argument against why you should be pursuing God in this manner.

In some instances you may talk to your Pastor about this congregation. He will likely convey some similar verses, yet may hit you with others as well.

You are not here because of anything I have said to you.

You are here because Adonai has placed upon your heart that there is more.

As you search, the Spirit inside you says – no, this isn't it...continue on, then you come upon our congregation...

Similar to Shmuel's search for a King for Israel, as guided but Adonai...

1Sa 16:1 Adonai said to Sh'mu'el, "How much longer are you going to go on grieving for Sha'ul, now that I have rejected him as king over Isra'el? Fill your horn with oil, and set out; I will send you to Yishai the Beit-Lachmi, because I have chosen myself a king from among his sons."

1Sa 16:7 But Adonai said to Sh'mu'el, "Don't pay attention to how he looks or how tall he is, because I have rejected him. Adonai doesn't see the way humans see — humans look at the outward appearance, but Adonai looks at the heart."

1Sa 16:8 Then Yishai called Avinadav and presented him to Sh'mu'el; but he said, "Adonai hasn't chosen this one

either."

1Sa 16:9 Yishai presented Shammah; again Sh'mu'el said, "Adonai hasn't chosen this one either."

1Sa 16:10 Yishai presented seven of his sons to Sh'mu'el; but Sh'mu'el told Yishai, "Adonai has not chosen these.

1Sa 16:11 Are all your sons here?" Sh'mu'el asked Yishai. He replied, "There is still the youngest; he's out there tending the sheep." Sh'mu'el said to Yishai, "Send and bring him back, because we won't sit down to eat until he gets here."

People tend to look on the outside – do they meet our expectations of what a congregation should be...

Much of this is done without stepping foot through the door to see what we are about, yet a decision is already made based on their understanding not God's.

Conclusion:

I responded to an email this week from a person whose sibling is a devout catholic and had emailed her a link to a Wikipedia entry on Messianic Judaism, asking - "if what was written is true"

From what was conveyed to me when I asked about the reason behind it, their reply was "my sibling is a devout Catholic and is worried about me and my pursuit of Messianic Judaism" The purpose of sending the link for comment, was in order to create a rebuttal to what was written.

In many cases, the people you talk with have no first hand experience with Messianic Judaism. They have likely never attended a congregation. If they have, it may have only been one time, maybe even a few. Yet there attendance was likely with a closed mind, having already passed judgment on us.

"this isn't the way church should be"

"where is the cross"

This congregation cannot be understood like a picture – one instance caught on film.

This congregation is something that needs to be experienced.

I have had other conversations with people, who come from Pentecostal churches who inquire about the Spirit in the congregation.

A person's experience here is usually based on what they are familiar with.

As I said at the very beginning, we are not a traditional synagogue and we are not a traditional church.

If we are neither of them, how can your expectations be directed towards one, when we are neither. An open mind with no expectations and the Ruach ha Kodesh will tell you if this is for you.

Getting back to the email...

This was my final response...

As I had mentioned previously, the link provided is a good start. There is a great deal of historical information pertaining to the Messianic Jewish Movement. Your observation is accurate. It is a fairly recent move of God, yet has its origin in Scripture where the first believers were all Jewish. The increased number of Jewish people coming to accept Yeshua as the Jewish Messiah has always existed but is accelerating in number. This is related to the Jewish people returning to the land, in relation to Deuteronomy 30. Adonai is bringing them back to the land and simultaneously is raising up Jewish people to lead the nation back to Him. God always prepares His people before

he returns.

Regarding "those things" you will need to be more specific. What are you specifically asking about regarding the information provided on the Wikipedia entry regarding Messianic Judaism.

Your brother can most certainly try to come up with a rebuttal, but keep in mind the following verses:

In response to Kefa and others who were conveying the message of Messiah, were taken to the Sanhedrin...

After their meeting, they were told to wait outside so the matter could be discussed.

Act 5:34 But one of the members of the Sanhedrin rose to his feet, a Parush named Gamli'el, a teacher of the Torah highly respected by all the people. He ordered the men put outside for a little while

Act 5:35 and then addressed the court: "Men of Isra'el, take care what you do to these people.

Act 5:36 Some time ago, there was a rebellion under Todah, who claimed to be somebody special; and a number of men, maybe four hundred, rallied behind him. But upon his being put to death, his whole following was broken up and came to nothing.

Act 5:37 After this, Y'hudah HaG'lili led another uprising, back at the time of the enrollment for the Roman tax; and he got some people to defect to him. But he was killed, and all his followers were scattered.

Act 5:38 So in the present case, my advice to you is not to interfere with these people, but to leave them alone. For if this idea or this movement has a human origin, it will collapse.

Act 5:39 But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop them; you might even find yourselves fighting God!" They heeded his advice.

Believe it or not, that is up to you.

I am the firm belief, that anyone who challenges this movement is in essence challenging God Himself.