

Notes: November 15, 2014

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. Praise and Worship Songs
8. Message
9. Aaronic Blessing
10. Kiddush
11. 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: Messianic Movement History - Honoring Yohanna Chernoff

In this week's Parashah (**Hayyei-Sarah**) Sarah's life we read of the length of her lifetime and her death in all of two verses.

Gen 23:1 Sarah lived to be 127 years old; these were the years of Sarah's life.

Gen 23:2 Sarah died in Kiryat-Arba, also known as Hevron, in the land of Kena`an; and Avraham came to mourn Sarah and weep for her.

We then read of Avraham's focus in providing Sarah with tomb in the remainder of Chapter 23.

Sarah was a true matriarch to Avraham in that she followed him wherever he was lead by Adonai. Far from perfect, she would nurture the next generation in Issac.

I tell you this because on Friday morning another matriarch passed on.

One of the Rabbi's on the forum made mention of this Parashah coinciding with her passing and indicated that he would be honoring her this week.

As I was praying about the direction for today's message in my cold medicine consumed brain, why not do the same thing?

Then another thought struck me.

Many of you who have become part of this congregation knowing very little about the history of the movement you are attaching your wagon to.

So, today as we remember the life of Yohanna Chernoff, the wife of Martin Chernoff I want to share with you some of the history of the modern Messianic Jewish movement.

In order to understand where we are today, we must first understand the origin of where we came from.

Messianic Judaism is a term that identifies Jewish people who have come to faith and believe that Yeshua is the Messiah promised throughout scripture. For the past three weeks I provided you significant scriptural evidence relating to this fact.

However, the term Messianic Judaism is relatively new.

In today's context Both the term and the concept of Jewish people coming to faith in Messiah are still relatively new, even though we read in scripture that at first it was the norm and not an anomaly.

Unfortunately history changed direction completely.

There were many things that happened in the 1800's where some have identified it as a time of spiritual awakening. Not only in the churches but also among the Jewish people:

Any student of Israel knows that Theodore Herzl in the late 1800s is the father of modern Zionism. His book, *The Jewish State*, called for the creation of a Jewish homeland as the only safe haven for the Jewish people.

Eliezer Ben Yehuda is considered the father of Modern Hebrew, a dead, unspoken language in 1880, now spoken by over 10 million people.

But, how well do you know the history of the Messianic Movement?

Excerpts from Wikipedia

In the 19th century, some groups attempted to create congregations and societies of Jewish converts to Christianity, though most of these early organizations were short-lived. Early formal organizations run by converted Jews include: the Anglican [London Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews](#) of [Joseph Frey](#) (1809), which published the first [Yiddish New Testament](#) in 1821; the "Beni Abraham" association, established by Frey in 1813 with a group of 41 [Jewish Christians](#) who started meeting at Jews' Chapel, London for prayers Friday night and Sunday morning; and the London [Hebrew Christian Alliance of Great Britain](#) founded by Dr. [Carl Schwartz](#) in 1866.

The September 1813 meeting of Frey's "Beni Abraham" congregation at the rented "Jews' Chapel" in [Spitalfields](#) is sometimes pointed to as the birth of the semi-autonomous [Hebrew Christian movement](#) within Anglican and other established churches in Britain, though the non-Anglican minister of the chapel at Spitalfields evicted Frey and his congregation only three years later, and Frey severed his connections with the Society. A new location was found and the Episcopal Jew's Chapel Abrahamic Society registered in 1835

In Eastern Europe, [Joseph Rabinowitz](#) established a Hebrew Christian mission and congregation called "Israelites of the New Covenant" in Kishinev, Ukraine in 1884. Rabinowitz was supported from overseas by the Christian [Hebraist Franz Delitzsch](#), translator of the first modern [Hebrew translation of the New Testament](#). In 1865, Rabinowitz created a sample order of worship for Sabbath morning service based on a mixture of Jewish and Christian elements. Mark John Levy pressed the Church of England to allow members to embrace Jewish customs.

Hopefully you will have noticed the uphill challenges Jewish believers faced in a predominantly Christian world.

I would call these challenges "getting your foot in the door"

Once you get your foot in the door, you can get the rest of you in the door. Once you are completely in the door, you

can bring others in. Once others are in you can start impacting the status quo.

Our foot in the door didn't exactly affect change with in the mainstream church, but brought forth change within the Messianic community.

From Wikipedia:

In the United States, a congregation of Jewish converts to Christianity was established in New York City in 1885.^[55] In the 1890s, immigrant Jewish converts to Christianity worshiped at the [Methodist](#) "Hope of Israel" mission on New York's [Lower East Side](#) while retaining some Jewish rites and customs.^[56] In 1895, the 9th edition of Hope of Israel's *Our Hope* magazine carried the subtitle "A Monthly Devoted to the Study of Prophecy and to Messianic Judaism", the first use of the term "Messianic Judaism".

Hope of Israel was controversial; other missionary groups accused its members of being [Judaizers](#), and one of the two editors of *Our Hope* magazine, [Arno C. Gaebelein](#), eventually repudiated his views and, as a result, was able to become a leader in the mainstream Christian evangelical movement.

In 1894, Christian missionary and Baptist minister [Leopold Cohn](#), a convert from Judaism, founded the Brownsville Mission to the Jews in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, New York as a Christian mission to Jews. After several changes in name, structure and focus, the organization is now called [Chosen People Ministries](#) and has operations and staff in the US and 11 other nations.

Then, in 1915 the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America was formed, an offshoot of the Hebrew Christian Alliance of Great Britain that was formed in 1866.

Missions to the Jews saw a period of growth between the 1920s and the 1960s.

In the 1940s and 50s, missionaries in Israel, including the [Southern Baptists](#), adopted the term *meshichyim* (משיחיים "Messianics") to counter negative connotations of the word *notsrim* (נוצרים "Christians", from "Nazarenes"); the term was used to designate all Jews who had converted to Protestant evangelical Christianity.

During this period of time we encounter a man by the name of Martin Chernoff:

Martin and his wife, Yohanna, worked for many years for an organization seeking to bring Jewish people to faith.

In the 1950's he received money from a Baptist organization (American Association for Jewish Evangelism) to create a Messianic congregation in Cincinnati, Beth Messiah, which is still in existence today.

He was constantly at odds with them, as he began to realize the need for Jewish believers to have their own meetings in a Jewish context.

The organization emphasized winning Jewish people to the faith and then funneling them into local churches to be discipled (where they would often lose their Jewish identity).

Martin was told he was not qualified to disciple "Hebrew Christians," as they were called then, and once, when he immersed several new Jewish believers in water at a conference, the leader of his organization saw red, as he rebuked Martin, telling him again that it was beyond his scope of authority.

"The Jesus Revolution and the Jews' is the biography that Martin's wife, Yohanna, wrote.

In the midst of a prayer meeting in 1963, just after the assassination of President Kennedy, Martin had the second of three visions. He saw, in addition to scores of Jewish people coming to faith (as in his first vision) a group of unkept and shabby young people—dressed in rags. He had no idea that the coming years would usher in the hippy phenomenon and that God would use his wife, Yohanna and him to bring many of these young Jewish people to Yeshua.

In April 1966, *Time Magazine* ran the headline: “*Is God Dead?*” However, only five years later, after this massive revival, their headline in June 1971 was, “*The Jesus Revolution.*”

Scores of young Jewish people came to faith in Cincinnati forming the nucleus of the Chernoff’s home congregation. Thousands more Jews embraced Yeshua all across the U.S. as God raised up a leadership for a new thing he was about to do.

One such young Jewish person was Aaron Bortz:

“I was a messed up 13yr old Jewish boy when first I met your mother. She said to me:

"Welcome, you are loved here." That love and enthusiasm was another of the lures haShem used to confirm his claim of Messiah. Many years later when I came back to Cincinnati as a believer she was a great encouragement. The world contains a little less light with her passing.

Aaron Bortz, Adat HaTikvah Messianic Congregation, Louisville, KY

In 1970 Martin had his third open vision. “*Two electrifying simple words stretched across the sky in the form of a banner.*” He saw the words: Messianic Judaism.

This vision would define the rest of Martin’s life and his legacy. The small group of Jewish believers in Cincinnati confessed:

“We are Jewish believers in Yeshua as our Messiah. We have our own destiny in the Lord. We will no longer be assimilated into the church and pretend to be non-Jews. If Yeshua Himself, His followers and the early Jewish believers tenaciously maintained their Jewish lifestyles, why was it right for them, but wrong now? Gentile converts are not expected to forsake their families, culture, holidays and traditions; nor shall we do so.”

No longer would they call themselves Hebrew Christians, but Messianic Jews.

Despite the fact they were seeing dozens of young Jewish people receive Yeshua, the leader of the AAJE organization who paid their salary gave them an ultimatum. They either must disband their congregation and hand over the names to the organization (so these Jews could be placed in churches), or leave.

Marty had a major decision to make: Stay with the organization, get paid, disband their congregation and funnel new believers to churches or resign his position, officially birth congregation Beth Messiah, and trust God to provide for their needs. Other than a few isolated cases, there was no example of a self-sustained, independent Messianic Congregation that was in existence back then.

After a lengthy discussion between the leaders and the congregants, it was decided that disbanding was not an option. Martin would become their rabbi and they would support Yohanna and him. Congregation Beth Messiah was birthed.

Soon Martin was elected to be president of the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America. More and more Jewish believers were calling themselves Messianic Jews instead of Hebrew Christians. The moniker *Hebrew Christian* emphasized that the believer was of Jewish background (A Jew who practiced Christianity), while *Messianic Jew*, emphasized that the believers continued to live as Jews, after believing in Yeshua.

However, changing the name of the HCAA would not be easy. Many old-timers strongly objected to the new Messianic theme and Jewish identity. They didn’t like the dancing or the singing of Klezmer (Yiddish sounding) songs with Messianic lyrics. The first vote was defeated, but not without controversy. Rather than fighting, Martin wisely put the issue to rest, realizing that it was only a matter of time.

Two years later, in 1975 the young *hippie* believers far outnumbered the old guard and the name was changed to the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (MJAA).

Eventually the Chernoffs would move to Philadelphia and take over the “Fink Zoo”—a group of young Jewish

believers who met in the home of Joe and Debbie Finklestein. They called their new congregation *Beth Yeshua*.

In 1984, the orthodox community had declared war on Beth Yeshua and they were fighting for their survival. By 1985, they were calling for a nationwide protest—with the goal of destroying the Messianic Jewish movement. Jews from all over were bussed in to protest and Beth Yeshua was their target. If Beth Yeshua could be toppled, then maybe they could crush the whole movement.

The folks at Beth Yeshua were hoping that Hurricane Gloria would ruin the planned protest. However, Pat Robertson rebuked the storm just before it hit his Virginia Beach-based CBN and Gloria headed out to sea. Pat was happy while the Messianic Jews in Philadelphia were dismayed.

However, when Beth Yeshua took their worship team outside in the midst of the anti-Messianic demonstration, the entire protest was diffused. Some protesters ended up actually dancing with the Beth Yeshua congregants. After a short time, leaders called off the protests and fled.

Raised as a second generation Messianic Jew, David Chernoff, was instrumental in establishing the IAMCS as part of the MJAA back in the early 80s. Today he continues to shepherd Beth Yeshua.

Older brother Joel Chernoff is considered a pioneer of Messianic Jewish Music. For over 20 years, he was lead singer and song writer for the group Lamb. Today Joel is the General Secretary of the MJAA.

Sister Hope is also involved in the movement.

A legacy that we see today, lead by the patriarch of the family but likely kept together in such a way that many probably never saw by the matriarch Yohanna.

She was likely the calm during the exciting yet stormy challenges that what we know today as Modern Messianic Judaism faced in its infancy.

There were many challenges in breaking free from the preconception of Jews practicing Christianity and becoming Messianic Jews who lived as Jews while believing in Yeshua as the Jewish Messiah.

There were challenges then, and there are challenges today. Even though we have established an identity, doesn't mean the work of Messiah is done.

We as a congregation face similar challenges as any other Messianic Synagogue. So when we understand the purpose of MJAA, you will understand that it is aligned with our Purpose:

Today, the MJAA's purpose is the following:

- To testify to the large and growing number of Jewish people who believe that Yeshua is the promised Jewish Messiah and Savior of the world
- To bring together Jewish and non-Jewish people who have a shared vision for Jewish revival
- And, most importantly, to introduce our Jewish brothers and sisters to the Jewish Messiah Yeshua

Kaddish