Fall 2019 / Volume 1 / Number 32



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GRACE OF GOD

Plus:

Yom Kippur in Israel

How Believers Are to Talk the Talk

The Time to Be a Righteous Gentile is Today!

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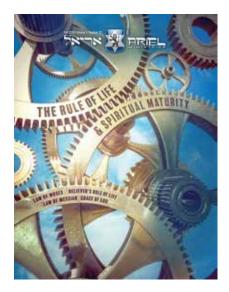
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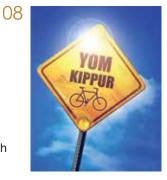
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12 **Cover Story:**

God's Word is full of rules, laws, and commandments. When reading the Scriptures, one quickly notices that not all of them apply to all people at all times. Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum sheds light on which rule of law is applicable to believers in Messiah Yeshua today and how it affects their spirituality.

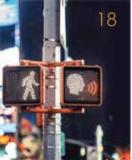


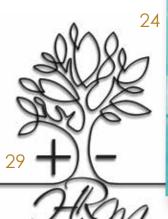




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Covenant Postmillennialism

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Evangelism:

Ariel's translator Martina Pifferi Speciale reaches Jewish People in Italy.

Eve on Israel:

Lilian Granovsky explains how Messianic Jews in Israel celebrate Yom Kippur.

Reflection:

Ariel's Board member, Tim Velasco, reflects on the believer's spiritual balance.

Bible Study:

James wrote his epistle with two purposes in mind: to strengthen the church in light of coming persecution and to focus on practical, Spirit-filled living. He begins to develop this second purpose in chapter 1, verses 19-25. As Jacques Isaac Gabizon shows in this article. James encourages his readers to focus on conduct rather than creed, behavior rather than belief, deed rather than doctrine.

Anti-Semitism:

Olivier Melnick challenges all Gentiles to consider standing up for the Jewish people at a time when anti-Semitism is once again sweeping our globe.

Feature:

In recent years, the Hebrew Roots movement has become more controversial than ever. Its supporters claim that it restores the original theological context of the first-century church. Its critics claim that the movement brings nothing but conflict and false doctrine. Mottel Baleston offers a balanced view, spelling out the pros and cons of this movement.

Theology:

32 Ineology. In this article, David James offers a comprehensive overview of progressive dispensationalism, showing clearly where it differs from the dispensationalism Ariel Ministries adheres to.

Discipleship:

Ann A. Burbridge explains how to teach a Messianic Bible class.





EDITOR'S LETTER

Purpose Statement

Ariel Ministries exists in order to evangelize Jewish people and to disciple Jewish and Gentile believers through intensive Bible teaching from a Jewish perspective.

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Let's make some disciples!

At a time in which believers are constantly bombarded with new ideas about "true spirituality," the question arises: What is the spiritual life? And how is the average believer—if he even exists—supposed to find out what kind of life the Lord would want

him to live? The magazine you are about to read discusses some practical aspects of the spiritual life. In a yet unpublished book on the topic, Dr. Fruchtenbaum writes:

The spiritual life is dependent on three factors, the first of which is regeneration. Living the spiritual life presupposes that one has been regenerated, that one has been saved.

The second factor is the Holy Spirit. He empowers the believer to live the spiritual life. In fact, the word "spiritual" relates this life to the Holy Spirit. He teaches believers spiritual truths (Jn. 16:12-15), guides them (Rom. 8:14), assures them of their salvation (Rom. 8:16), prays for them (Rom. 8:26-27), and gives them spiritual gifts for the growth of the local congregation (I Cor. 12:4-11).

The third factor in spirituality is time. Just like physical development takes time, it also takes time to reach the stage mentioned in I Corinthians 2:15 where one would be described as *he that is spiritual*.

The outworking of a Spirit-filled life covers many areas, some of which are discussed in this magazine. Two of the articles are close to my heart: Olivier Melnick's, as it once again reminds us of the importance of fighting anti-Semitism; and Ann Burbridge's, as it introduces thoughts on how to run a Bible study.

Why would the latter touch my heart? Like you, I have seen many brothers and sisters who gain incredible knowledge of the Word of God. Some of them sat under the best of teachers, always eager to learn more. There is nothing wrong with studying the Bible, but often the result of much knowledge is that we become critical of others, such as our pastors or Bible study teachers. Instead of passing on that which we have learned, we run the danger of becoming puffed up with knowledge (I Cor. 8:1). Ann Burbridge shows that organizing a Bible study, using Ariel's awesome teaching material, is not that hard. For me, she is a wonderful example of a person who does not just "sit" on all that the Lord has taught her, but is willing to share it with her sisters.

Ariel Ministries' declared purpose is to disciple others from a Messianic Jewish perspective. This is the reason why we develop excellent teaching material, be it in form of online courses, commentaries, or even our summer program at Camp Shoshanah. Will you join us? Will you use what you have learned—even in this magazine—and pass it on to others so that together we fulfill the great commission?

In His service,

non ane

Christiane Jurik Editor-in-Chief editorarielministries@gmail.com



Ariel Mission Branches & Representatives





ARIEL BRANCHES



Ariel Australia Chris & Lisa Savage

Website:www.ariel.org.au Email: info@ariel.org.au Chris and Lisa Savage represent Ariel Ministries in Australia. Based in Victoria, they teach the Scriptures from the Jewish perspective in weekly and bi-monthly classes and day seminars.



Ariel Canada

Jacques Isaac and Sharon Gabizon Website: www.arielcanada.com Email: info@arielcanada.com

J. I. and Sharon Gabizon represent Ariel Ministries in Canada. Their projects include door-to-door evangelism of Jewish homes in Montreal and translating Ariel's manuscripts into French. Ariel Canada established a messianic congregation in Montreal called Beth Ariel.



Jackie Fierman

Jackie Fierman has been with Ariel Canada since January of 2005, traveling and sharing about the ministry and teaching Ariel material in Canada and the U.S.A.



Ariel India Bakul N. Christian

Email: bakulchristian@yahoo.co.in Bakul Christian represents Ariel Ministries in India and resides with his wife in Ahmedabad. He teaches Ariel's material all over the country and is responsible for the translations into the Gujarat language.



Ariel Israel Sasha & Lilian Granovsky

Email: sashag@ariel.org Sasha and Lilian Granovsky represent Ariel Ministries in Israel. The husband and wife team has been representing Ariel Ministries in Israel since October 2009. They are responsible for coordinating the translation of our manuscripts and books into Hebrew and Russian.



Ariel China

For safety issues, we must protect the identity of this branch. Please keep them in your prayers.



Ariel Germany

Website: www.cmv-duesseldorf.de Email: cmv-cmv@t-online.de Thanks to Manfred Künstler and his wife Hanna, Ariel Ministries has had a presence in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland since 1985. In 2002, the work was passed on to Georg Hagedorn who, eight years later, turned it into a full branch. Today, this branch is led by a team of brothers and sisters.



Ariel Hungary Ivan & Rita Nagy Email: hungary@ariel.org

Ivan and Rita Nagy represent Ariel Ministries in Hungary. The husband and wife team has developed a Come & See website in Hungarian. They also host several home Bible study groups, teaching from Ariel's materials. Their goal is to make teachings available to Jewish and Gentile believers and unbelievers in Hungary.



Ariel New Zealand Web: http://ariel.org.nz/

This branch is led by Johan Jansen van Vuuren, Nigel Christensen, Matthew Lord, and John Cavanagh. For information about the many activities of this branch, please contact info@ariel.co.nz.

Ariel Ministries Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas

This branch is devoted to teaching the Word of God from a biblical Jewish perspective in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. We also travel throughout the United States. If you are interested in hosting a teaching session, symposium, or seminar contact us at dfw@ariel.org.

ARIEL REPRESENTATIVES



Michael & Hannah Gabizon – Students (Hamilton)

Email: michaelgabizon@gmail.com Michael and Hannah Gabizon are missionaries representing Ariel Ministries in Canada. The young couple has actively been involved in teaching and discipling people through God's Word. Their goal is to identify other young people within their sphere of influence who may be interested in becoming involved with Ariel.



John Metzger – Field Representative (Pennsylvania)

Website: www.promisestoisrael.org Email: johnmetzger@ariel.org Missionary and author John Metzger represents Ariel Ministries in Pennsylvania. He is a teacher and speaker who actively travels throughout the central and eastern part of the U.S., speaking at various churches and conferences.



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CampShoshanah@ariel.org Gary and his wife Missy are the managers and camp facilitators of the Shoshanah campus in Upstate New York. Every summer they help





Roberto Anchondo – Field Representative (El Paso, Texas, New Mexico, and Mexico)

Roberto Anchondo represents Ariel Ministries in parts of the Southwest regions of the U.S. and some cities in Mexico. He is currently discipling groups of men in the Jewish perspective. He also works with numerous churches in Mexico, teaching the importance of standing by Israel.

Jack Nakashima (Ohio)



Email: jacknariel@gmail.com Jack Nakashima represents Ariel Ministries in Dayton, OH. Previously serving in Israel, he is now available to teach and disciple in the U.S.



MINISTRY NEWS



Hungary

In 2012, Ariel Hungary hosted the first Messianic conference in Budapest, and a new tradition was born. Every other year, Dr. Fruchtenbaum would come and teach our fellow believers in Hungary. However, due to a tour Arnold had scheduled for Germany, Austria, and Slovakia, we broke the tradition and hosted the Fifth Messianic Conference in the "off year," at the end of May. As always, the "Frucht" gave his best and taught the Bible from a Jewish perspective, covering the topics of Nicodemus and the Sermon on the Mount. He also gave his testimony. This was a blessed time for all of us. The first evening, we were in a new place, a Methodist congregation. The pastor is Jewish, and the church has a very good connection to the Jewish community. They put a huge emphasis on Holocaust remembrance. The room was packed with about one hundred attendants. The two other lectures were held at the Midnight Call Mission's place. Many young people came to hear Arnold speak, and we also reconnected with several believers who travel from the countryside to every conference we have organized so far. The result was that the venue was full both days, with seventy to ninety attendants. Ivan interpreted the lectures, and we uploaded the audio recordings to our homepage.

Another way Arnold impacted Budapest is seen in a square near the hotel where he usually stays. This year, it was renamed Jerusalem Square. We think he walked there too much. © We are continuing to read the Tanach with our Jewish friends and have begun to read through the book of Isaiah. What a great opportunity to show Yeshua the Messiah in the Scriptures!



The venues in Budapest were filled with believers who came from near and far to attend the Fifth Messianic Conference.



Ariel Hungary's branch leader Ivan Nagy interpreting for Dr. Fruchtenbaum in Budapest

MINISTRY NEWS





Germany¹

Traveling through the country with Dr. Fruchtenbaum is always both a challenge and a great blessing. The challenge comes from the work of interpreting. Every word of Arnold's teaching is important, but there is no time to think about the "perfect" translation. At the tender age of 75, the Frucht moves fast and with precision through the biblical narrative and the important doctrinal parts of the lectures. However, the challenge is met with the great blessing of knowing that our German brothers and sisters learn to study God's Word from the proper-the Messianic Jewish-perspective. The reactions we receive are priceless! They range from "Why are our churches not teaching this material?" to "How do I get more?"

This year, Arnold's six-week tour through Europe led him to new grounds. A congregation in Vienna, Austria, invited him as a speaker, and the turn-out was fabulous, with up to 150 people filling the small venue in the center of town. Historically, Austria has been in the firm hands of the Catholic Church. According to a survey by Operation World, only 0.5% of Austrians identified as evangelical believers at the beginning of this century. The general understanding among the believers who came to listen to Arnold was that the percentage hasn't changed much in the past few years. This means that today, there are roughly 44,000 confessing evangelical believers in this small, middle-Europe-



Dr. Fruchtenbaum teaching at Beit Sar Shalom, a Messianic congregation in Berlin. The Hebrew says: "Know before whom you stand."

an country. Those who came to hear Arnold teach repeatedly exclaimed how grateful they were to have been able to learn from one of the best Messianic scholars of our times and invited him to come back next year.

During the time of Arnold's visit in Vienna, an interesting exhibition lined one of the avenues of this magnificent city. Titled "Lest we forget," the exhibition featured 200 large photographic portraits of Holocaust survivors. For weeks, the impressive images stood untouched, until one night, during the week of Arnold's visit, someone slashed several of the faces with a knife. The outrage was palpable in the streets of Vienna, and so was the response! Several Catholic and Muslim organizations decided to set up vigils and guard the exhibition around the clock.

The history of the Jews in Vienna goes back over eight hundred years to the 12th century. One of the pictures on the next page shows the remains of a synagogue that was destroyed in the

Wiener Geserah pogrom of 1420 /1421. To this day, the place where the synagogue once stood is called Judenplatz (Jews Plaza). At the end of the 19th century, Vienna had become



The Austrian Jewish artist Arik Brauer lost his father in the Holocaust. In 1984, he painted the hauntingly beautiful My Father in Winter, exhibited in a Jewish museum in Vienna.





Dr. Fruchtenbaum getting ready to teach an evangelical congregation in Vienna, Austria.

one of the most sought-after centers of Jewish culture in Europe due to an edict signed into power in 1782 by Emperor Joseph II which paved the way for Jewish emancipation. This Edict of Tolerance, as it was called, granted certain freedoms to the Jewish population they didn't have before. However, they were still forbidden to worship in public or form religious communities.

Eventually, after cautious reforms under the leadership of Rabbi Isaak Mannheimer (1793-1865), the foundation stone was laid for a new synagogue in 1825. From then on, Vienna became a magnet for European Jews, and the community grew from roughly 6,000 people in 1860 to 40,000 ten years later and 147,000 at the turn of the century. Among them was the father of modern Zionism, Theodor Herzl (1860-1904). Born in Hungary, Herzl lived, studied, and worked in Vienna. Another famous Jew who mainly worked in that city was Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), the founder of psychoanalysis.

Unfortunately, at the beginning of the 20th century, Vienna was also "a hotbed of anti-Semitism ... Jewish students were periodically beaten up at the University of Vienna while the police, barred from 'academic soil,' watched with amusement as nationalistic fraternity members jumped isolated Jews and kicked them down the two central ramps of the pseudo-Renaissance building. Day after day, pan-Germanic groups and their press indulged in tirades about Vienna's Verjudung, the penetration by Jews.^{2"}

The time when Jewish people were able to live peacefully in Austria finally came to an end with the rise of Adolf Hitler and his henchmen. By 1941, 130,000 Jews had fled Vienna. A year later, those 65,000 Jewish people who had stayed in the city became victims of the Holocaust.

To this day, the Jewish people have not returned in substantial numbers. A conservative estimation by the Orthodox Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Wien ("Vienna Israelite Community") is that there were around 15,000 Jews living in Austria in 2005, the majority of which reside in Vienna.3 Paired with a weak and small evangelical community that hasn't even fully understood its responsibility to share the good news of the Jewish Messiah with the Jews first (Rom. 1:16), it becomes clear that Austria is a worthy mission field. After Arnold's successful visit to Vienna, Ariel Germany is hopeful to have found an open door into this country. Please pray with us that we will be able to follow our calling!



Designed by Rachel Whiteread, the Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial in Vienna commemorates the 65.000 Austrian victims of the Holocaust.



The excavated remains of the Or-Sarua Synagoge, destroyed in the Wiener Geserah of 1421, are located underneath the Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial.



"Lest we forget "- exhibition in memory of the millions of Jews who perished in the Holocaust. During the week of Dr. Fruchtenbaum's visit in Vienna, some of the portraits were vandalized.



Entrance to one of the two Jewish museums in Vienna

¹ All pictures in this article were taken by Christiane Jurik.

² "Austria's Jewish Question," *The New York Times*, May 3, 1981.

³ Ariel Muzicant, "Österreich ist anders," Der Standard, May 4, 2005.

Reaching Jewish People in Italy By Martina Pifferi Speciale EVANGELISM



Reaching Jewish People in

By Martina Pifferi Speciale

The Lord touched many hearts through Dr. Fruchtenbaum's 2018 conference in Italy and through the Ariel material that has already been translated to Italian. We have received many thank-you notes telling us how The Footsteps of the Messiah in Italian has helped transform the lives of dear brothers and sisters willing to build a deeper relationship with the Father. A new love for the prophetic word is slowly but powerfully touching the lives of many Italians. Ariel Ministries material is also impacting our perspective on the modern concept of anti-Semitism and especially on how anti-Semitism is touching our churches in ways we couldn't think possible. In that regard, the translation of the Ariel Magazine has been a huge blessing for all those who worked with us and who are reading it. We are now working on the website, along with our dear brothers from Ariel New Zealand. The website will help us reach more Italians for Dr. Fruchtenbaum and Mottel Baleston's upcoming conference in Italy, in October 2019.

Ariel Ministries has also been a way to underline an aspect of our spiritual life we have never thought of before. Are we effective in reaching the Jewish people? Do we pray to find new ways to share the gospel with the Jews? Are actively involved we in Jewish outreach?

Sadly, we had to admit that this question had never touched our minds before. Most of us don't live in cities with a Jewish community nearby, but we realized, for the first time, this is not a justification to be disobedient to the Father.

So, we started to pray that the Lord might help us reach His people, and He did! Sometime after Arnold's conference in September 2018, we received a phone call. There was the possibility to study Hebrew in the Florence Jewish community! This was the answer to our prayers!

Even though I don't live in Florence, with the help of my family and church, I had the chance to go to Florence once a week to study Hebrew. There, the Lord opened the door to share the good news with a group of eight people, Jews and Gentiles. I had the joy to talk extensively with my Israeli

teacher, to give her a complete Bible in Hebrew, to share with all my class The Nature of the Bible, and with one of them even The Logos and the Rabbi. Now, as Dr. Fruchtenbaum told me, we will see what God will do.



Martina with two Jewish sisters who attended Dr. Fruchtenbaum's first conference in Italy in 2018.



Studying Hebrew in Florence. Ariel's translator Martina is in the middle. Left of her is Osnat, the Hebrew teacher.



EYE ON ISRAEL YOM Kippur in Israel

YOM KIPPUR IN ISRAEL By Lilian Granovsky

Then I will pour OUT ON THE HOUSE OF DAVID AND THE INHABITANTS OF **ERUSALEM A SPIRIT** OF GRACE AND SUPPLICATION. WHEN THEY WILL LOOK TOWARD ME WHOM THEY PIERCED. THEY WILL MOURN FOR HIM AS ONE MOURNS FOR AN ONLY SON AND **GRIEVE BITTERLY** FOR HIM, AS ONE **GRIEVES FOR A** FIRSTBORN. (Zech. 12:10)

Before sitting down to write this article, I asked several of our friends and family members the same question: "How do people in Israel celebrate Yom Kippur?" One of the answers I received was, "They go on vacation in order to NOT celebrate the Day of Atonement!" This rather sarcastic answer requires an explanation. There are three holy seasons in the fall of each year, one following the other. These feasts are observed as federal holidays, and all stores and businesses are closed for the occasion. The first holy day is Rosh Hashana, with three days off; the second holy day is Yom Kippur, with two days off; and the third holy day is Succoth, which is observed with eight to nine days of vacation. There are a few days in between these feasts, but people try to bridge them by using a few of their annual vacation days in addition to these official holidays.

Two other answers I received to my question were, "They fast." and "They ride their bicycles on car-free roads for one special day a year." Let's consider these two answers.

Starting on Rosh Hashana, every person you meet in Israel and speak to for even the briefest of moments will tell you two sentences. First, they will wish you "Gmar Hatima Tova" (or just "Hatima Tova"), which means "May your name be written in the Book of Life the next year." People in Israel will say this even if they do not believe in a God who looks at their deeds of the previous year, checks if they fast and pray at this coming Yom Kippur, and decides whether to grant them another year or to take their life. In fact, it does not even matter if they believe in God at all. They will still wish you Hatima Tova, meaning "May God write your name in the list of those who will survive this coming year." Expressed slightly differently, they hope that you may find favor in His eyes and stay healthy and alive. The expression has become a polite greeting, such as, "Stay well! Be healthy! I wish you the best!"

The second sentence you will hear during Yom Kippur is a question: "Are you fasting?" By asking this question, people try to figure out in which "box" you fit. Are you like them or are you in a different camp?

The one who hears these two sentences responds in kind. However, as believers in Messiah Yeshua, we feel awkward to have to say, "*Hatima Tova*." We do not believe in this process of God making decisions over

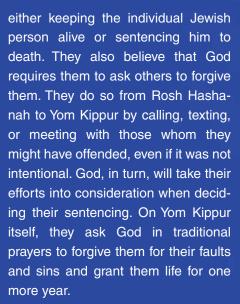
HATIMA TOVA



life and death according to our deeds or behavior on Yom Kippur. Therefore, many of us use the opportunity to share the gospel, responding: "I am already on God's list, and I wish you the same!" Usually, this bold answer confuses them. Some ask, "How come?" Others just look at you quizzically and rush away, trying to digest what they just heard.

If you get the chance to ask them the second question, "Are you fasting?", they will be divided in two groups. The first group will answer, "Yes, I do!" and they will look very proud of themselves. The second group will answer, "No, I don't" and they will be very proud as well!

We asked а few friends, colleagues, and family members who are not saved yet why and how they celebrate Yom Kippur. They responded by saying that usually people fast because that is how they grew up and they simply want to keep the tradition. This group of people are usually agnostics, atheists, or New Agers. The other group not only fast, they also pray and go to the synagogues before and after the 24-hour Yom Kippur observance. These people believe in God (they are not ultra-Orthodox, but they wear kippa and call themselves "traditional"). They believe that God makes His decision on Yom Kippur of



EYE ON ISRAEL

Ultra-Orthodox Jews follow their own traditions, and since we do not have contact with them, these traditions are a mystery to us.

On Yom Kippur, the children in Israel are engaged in bike riding activities organized either by their schools or by other groups to which they belong. The children hardly eat on that day, not because they decided to fast, but because they run around all day long forgetting to eat and drink. There is no spiritual connotation to this tradition.

Some Messianic believers fast on Yom Kippur, others do not. Some ride the bicycles with their children, others do not. However, beginning with Rosh Hashanah, they all pray, and they continue at least until the end of Succoth if not all other days of the year to pray for the people of Israel, that God may open their eyes, hearts, and minds so they will see, hear, accept, and welcome their only Messiah, who loves them, died for them, and rose on the third day to proclaim that those who believe in Him do not need to fast and worry whether they will be found in His Book of Life. They already know they are!



By Tim Velasco

I heard Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum once say that the spiritual life is "the kind of life that produces a spiritual believer" as opposed to a carnal believer. It is the kind of life that is only available to those who have been born again and therefore have the Holy Spirit and

have had time to develop a life that leads to spiritual maturity.

Unfortunately, in our modern world many people who are born again have had plenty of time to develop, but have put little to no effort into that process. Some have been led astray by false teaching, and others have simply given up. This has led to lives that show little of the characteristics of true biblical spirituality. Unfortunately, my life for many years was just like that: a life that was not in balance with the Word of God, but in sync with a world



Hovering a helicopter is like trying to ride a unicycle on top of a big beachball while chewing gum.

that is spinning out of control. My life did not have a Messiah-like perspective.

As a pilot I prize balance, but never as much as when I first took flying lessons in a helicopter a few years ago and was learning how to hover. This is an essential skill to develop if you are going to be able to fly a helicopter solo, that is, without the help of an instructor. I remember being so scared for the first two hours, thinking that at any moment I would "ball things up," meaning I would crash, burn, and die. I remember my instructor saying that I needed to focus my eyes on a point ahead of me on the horizon and make my corrections based on what my eyes were telling me

There were a few times I would say to my instructor in a panicked tone, "You got it!!" He would then gently come on the controls and shadow my movements and bring stability and balance back to what looked and felt to me like an accident in progress. In time, he intervened less and less, and suddenly I was hovering! Now look, this was an ugly hover. I am sure that if you were a passenger on this machine or a bystander on the ground, you would not be impressed. But it was me, me! It was not my instructor helping me: I was hovering.

In time, I got better and better, and next thing I knew I could do it almost without thinking. I want to emphasize the word "almost": There were a number of times when I scared myself because I assumed things where in balance when in fact they were not. During those moments of instability, I had to remember the good instruction I had received and put them into practice without delay because I was flying solo; there was no one there to help me. And there were a few times I wished my instructor had been there to shadow me on the controls and help me bring things back into balance without the horrific spike in my heart rate.

There are many parallels here to the spiritual life, but unlike helicopter flying, the spiritual life is not meant to be "flown" solo. Not only do we have the Holy Spirit shadowing our movements and helping us bring things into balance, we also have the wise counsel of believing friends who can help us detect things we cannot see that might lead to instability. It really is up to us to accept these inputs and live or try to go about it solo and "ball things up."

My question to you is: Do you have at least two people you can go to at any time who have the freedom to tell you that you are out of balance? If the answer is no, may I suggest you pray and ask the Lord to help you honor Him in your life by having good counsel always available? This way, you can make your corrections based on what you see in the living Word of God as you keep your eyes firmly fixed on Yeshua. After all, a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver (Prov. 25:11) and *better is a neighbor* who is near than a brother who is far away (Prov. 27:10b).

For a complete treatment on the topic of the spiritual life, please visit ariel.org or this author's podcast series at www.livingspiritually.life.



BY DR. ARNOLD G. FRUCHTENBAUM

The Rule of Life and Spiritual Maturity

By Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum

ULE OF LIFE VARADUT

SPIRITUAL MATUR God's Word is full of rules, laws, and commandments, and if we are honest, most of us like it when we are being told what to do and which rule of law is applicable to our lives. However, when reading the Scriptures, one quickly notices that the laws God gave to man did not apply at all times and to all people. To find out which rule of law is applicable to believers in Messiah Yeshua and how it affects their spirituality, this article compares the rule of life in the **Hebrew Scriptures** and today.



The Believer's Rule of Life in the Hebrew Scriptures

The Hebrew Scriptures make a distinction between two time periods: the pre-Mosaic period and the Mosaic period itself. The pre-Mosaic period covered 2,500 years. During this period, four dispensations provided different rules of life for the believers: the dispensation of innocence, the dispensation of conscience, the dispensation of human government, and the dispensation of promise. During the first three of these dispensations, the rules of life were imposed upon all humanity. However, the rule of life in the dispensation of promise only applied to one people: the Jews. The dispensation was based upon the Abrahamic Covenant, which contained promises and responsibilities. The promises were unconditional, and the Jewish responsibility was to remain in the place of blessing. The Mosaic Law, which came later, was an addition to the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant.

While it is obvious that the Mosaic Law was a rule of life with very specific and detailed commandments, the divine method of government from Adam to Moses did not manifest itself in a code of law. Yet, even when there was no specific code spelled out, it is obvious that God expected people to follow some type of rule of life. For example, even in his state of innocence, Adam was given rules and regulations. Noah and Abraham were given other commands. It is obvious, then, that God expected man to understand his responsibility and to follow specific rules. He therefore provided a rule of life for the Old Testament saints even before Moses. He expected obedience from humanity in general, but from believers in particular. With each dispensation, there was also a covenant, and each new covenant contained a specific rule of life. The dispensation of innocence was based upon the Edenic Covenant, which spelled out rules and regulations. These became the rule of life for that period. After the fall of man, between Adam and Noah, came the dispensation of conscience, which was based on the Adamic Covenant. It also contained a rule of life to be followed. The dispensation of conscience came to an end with the Noahic flood. Following the flood came the dispensation of government, which was based upon the Noahic Covenant. The details of this dispensation are given in Genesis 9. Once again rules and regulations were spelled out, and a rule of life was given. Finally, with Abraham came the dispensation of promise, which was based on the Abrahamic Covenant. The covenant was not imposed upon all humanity, but only upon the Jewish nation, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Jewish history existed for four centuries before the Law of Moses was given. Yet, it is evident that God had a rule of life for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to follow. The Mosaic period lasted about 1,500 years. Throughout this time, the Law of Moses was the rule of life, and to visibly show spirituality, one had to obey this law.

There were many purposes of the Mosaic Law, but for this study we will limit the scope to purposes related specifically to the spiritual life. First, the law was not a way of salvation (Rom. 3:20; Gal. 3:11). Second, the purpose was to provide the Jewish people with a rule of life in all areas of the human experience. The obligations of the believer before God were all contained in the Mosaic Law. However, the law was not intended to bring people to redemption, but to provide a rule of life for them after having been redeemed. Third, the law was to serve as a tutor (Gal. 3:24). The Greek word for "tutor" is the origin of the English word "pedagogue." It literally means "a child disciplinarian." This is what the Mosaic Law was: a tutor whose goal it was to lead a Jewish person to the Messiah. AAA





As to its content, the Law of Moses contained a complete system, setting forth the entire will of God for the individual Israelite as well as for the whole nation. It dealt with specific areas of life, and these are identified by three different terms. It included commandments (Ex. 20:1-17). These are normally, though not exclusively, related to the moral issues of the Mosaic Law. It also contained judgments (Ex. 21:1-24:11). These were concerned with civil issues. And there were ordinances, which covered religious issues (Ex. 24:12-31:18). Finally, the Law of Moses contained a conditional element or an element of merit (Deut. 28:1-68), which means that there were blessings for obedience, but curses for disobedience.

Altogether, there were four ramifications of the Mosaic Law. As far as application was concerned, the first ramification was that it was for Jews only. This confuses many Jewish and Gentile believers who feel they must be under just some parts of the Law or under a great part of it or, in some cases, under the whole law except for the sacrifices. But as far as the application of the law is concerned, it was given to Jews only not to the world at large, and most certainly not to the church at large. The following verses confirm that the law was applicable only to the Jewish people: Deuteronomy 4:8; 5:1-3; Romans 2:14; 9:4-5; and Ephesians 2:11-12.

The second ramification of the Mosaic Law is that it was applicable to proselytes. If a Gentile converted to Judaism, he obligated himself to keep the whole law.

A third ramification is that the Mosaic Law did not serve to institute a right relationship between Israel and God. It was a rule of life for a believing Israelite; it did not serve as a means of attaining a relationship with God. However, once an Israelite had obtained a spiritual relationship with God by faith, then the law was his rule of life. In cases of failure to do what it demanded, sacrifices became the means of restoration, both individually and nationally.

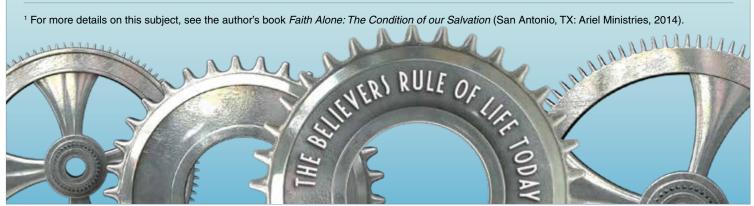
The fourth ramification is that the Mosaic Law was an addition (Gal. 3:19). In order to augment sin with the characteristic of transgression and to show "the exceeding sinfulness of sin," the law was added to the Abrahamic Covenant. The law is righteous (Rom. 7:12-14), but it also provokes sin (Rom. 7:8). As a rule of life, it also became a curse (Gal. 3:10), leading to condemnation (II Cor. 3:9) and death (Rom. 7:10-11).

The Believer's Rule of Life Today

The law began with Moses at Sinai (Ex. 19:3-8; Deut. 5:1-3) and ended with Yeshua's death on the cross (Gal. 3:19).¹ With the Law of Moses having been made obsolete by the death of Messiah, what is the believer's rule of life today? Before discussing the topic, a short note must be made on the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are part of the Mosaic Law. Consequently, along with the other 603 commandments, they became obsolete when the law was rendered inoperative. As will be seen, believers today are under "the Law of Messiah" and are required to obey only the commands of this law. However, when a commandment is found both in the Law of Moses and in "the Law of Messiah," they must obey it. Of the Ten Commandments, nine are repeated in "the Law of Messiah" and are therefore obligatory for the believer today.

The first commandment, which forbids idol worship, is found in "the Law of Messiah" in Acts 14:15. The second commandment, which is against images made to be worshipped, is found in I John 5:21. The third commandment, which forbids taking the name of the Lord in vain, is repeated in James 5:12. The fourth commandment of keeping the Sabbath is not part of "the Law of Messiah." Therefore, the believer today has no obligation to obey this law. The fifth commandment demands that one's parents be honored, and this is also

¹ For more details on this subject, see the author's book Faith Alone: The Condition of our Salvation (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2014).







taught in Ephesians 6:1. The sixth commandment, which forbids murder, is taught in I John 3:15. The seventh commandment, which is against adultery, is found in I Corinthians 6:9-10. The eighth commandment, which forbids stealing, is found in Ephesians 4:28. The ninth commandment, which is against bearing false witness, is found in Colossians 3:9. The tenth commandment, which forbids coveting, is found in Ephesians 5:3.

The Law of Messiah

The believer today is under "the Law of Messiah" (Gal. 6:2). Just as the Law of Moses was known by other names, such as "the Law of God" (Josh. 24:26; Neh. 8:8; Rom. 2:23; 8:7) and "the Law of Jehovah" (II Kg. 10:31; I Chron. 16:40; Ps. 1:2; Is. 30:9), so "the Law of Messiah" also has other names in the New Testament. In Romans 8:2, it is called "the law of the Spirit of life." In James 1:25, it is called "the perfect law of liberty," and in James 2:12, "a law of liberty."

It is called "the Law of Messiah" because it was given by Messiah Yeshua. It is called "the law of the Spirit of life" because the indwelling Holy Spirit enables the believer to live according to its demands so that he can live the spiritual life. It is called "the perfect law" because it does not contain the flaws of the Mosaic Law.

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According to the book of Hebrews, the Mosaic Law was flawed by weakness in that it was unable to provide the Old Testament saint with the power to keep it. It is called "the law of liberty" because it liberated the Jewish people from the curse of the Law of Moses. Just as the Law of Moses had many commandments, "the Law of the Messiah" also has many commandments.

There are a few principles of the Hebrew Scriptures that are eternal. This means that they are still obligatory even for today's believers. One example of an eternal principle is that God will always punish sin. Also applicable to today are the laws found in the Noahic Covenant, the Adamic Covenant, and the Abrahamic Covenant. Furthermore, the poets of Israel taught many such principles in the books of Psalms and Proverbs, and many truths in the Prophets are not rooted in the Mosaic Law, but in eternal principles. These are still as obligatory as they ever were. Therefore, there are two bases for today's rule of life: "the Law of the Messiah" and the eternal principles of the Old Testament.

Divine Enablement

The rule of life for believers today is guided by divine enablement. It is promised to the believer in a manner not provided for the Old Testament

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saint (Acts 1:8; Rom. 5:5; 6:4; 8:3-4, 9; I Cor. 2:1-13; 6:19; 10:3-6; Gal. 3:2; I Thess. 4:8; I Jn. 3:24; 4:13). This divine enablement is made possible by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, whose ministry today is different from what it used to be during Old Testament times. This is clearly brought out in John 7:37-39. The Hebrew Scriptures do report that some people were indwelled by the Spirit, but II Kings 2:9-12 teaches that this was not universal among believers. Furthermore, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit was not permanent, as it is today. For example, in Psalm 51:11, King David prayed: take not your Holy Spirit from me. The Holy Spirit did indwell David, but He could also leave him. David's prayer was therefore a valid Old Testament prayer, but it is not a valid New Testament prayer, since every believer is indwelled permanently by the Holy Spirit.

Manner of Life

The believer today need not wonder what manner of life he should choose. The New Testament clearly admonishes him to imitate Yeshua. Doing so will produce the likeness of the Messiah.

For example, Romans 8:29 states: For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the

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firstborn among many brethren. According to this verse, the believer's goal is to be conformed to the image of the Son of God. We are to have the likeness of the Messiah. Later, in Philippians 2:5, Paul admonished us to have this mind in us, which was also in Messiah Yeshua. We should have like-mindedness with the Messiah, which means being like Him.

A similar point is made in I Peter 2:21: For hereunto were ye called: because Messiah also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps. The context of this verse is suffering. Since the Messiah was willing to suffer, we should be willing to suffer for the faith; He is our example.

One more example is found in I John 4:17: Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, even so are we in this world. Just as Yeshua was in the world but is no longer of the world, even so, we are in this world but are no longer of it. Once again, the emphasis of this issue is likeness to the Messiah.

The Grace of God

While we are to imitate the Messiah and become like Him; it is the grace of God that produces this in the believer. This is consistently taught in the Scriptures of the New Testament, and the following references are just some examples: THE GRACE OF GOD

- ¢ Romans 12:3-8, 15:15
- 众 I Corinthians 1:4, 3:10, 15:10
- 众 II Corinthians 1:12, 4:15, 6:13, 8:1,6-7, 9:8, 12:9
- ¢ Galatians 2:9
- 众 Ephesians 3:28, 4:7, 29
- ¢ Philippians 1:7
- 众 Colossians 3:16, 4:6
- ¢ II Thessalonians 1:12
- 众 II Timothy 2:1
- ✿ Hebrews 4:16, 12:15
- ¢ James 4:6
- ¢ II Peter 3:18

All these verses emphasize that it is the grace of God that produces the likeness of the Messiah in the believer.

The Areas of the Believer's Rule of Life Today

Just as the Law of Moses once covered many areas of the believer's life, so "the Law of Messiah" pertains to many areas of life today, three of which will be surveyed here. The first area is the relationship to human government. There is both a proper and an improper subjection in this area. As long as the civil law does not command us to do something that contradicts Scripture, we should obey. It may neither be our way of doing things nor follow our own particular political frame of reference; yet, if the civil government passes a law that does not violate Scripture, we are to obey it. This is proper subjection to human government. Some examples of this are found in Romans 13:1-7, Titus 3:1, and I Peter 2:13-17.

There is also improper subjection, when we are expected to comply with something that clearly contradicts the Word of God. Biblical examples of improper subjection include Acts 4:19-20 and 5:29. If the government tells us that we cannot preach the gospel, then we disobey that law. If the government says we need to have an abortion, we disobey that law. When the Nazi government in Germany passed resolutions that Jews should be exterminated, no German believer should have obeyed that law.

If subjection to human government allows for certain actions to change a law we feel contradicts Scripture, we should take advantage of it. Paul did so in Acts 16:37-40, when he lawfully protested an official action by the civil authorities. Another way of properly using the law is for gaining rights (Acts 22:25-29; 23:1-10; 25:10-12; 26:32). Where the law allows us to gain our rights, we should use it.

The second area pertains to the believer's relationship to work. The New Testament clearly expects believers to work for a living. In I Thessalonians 4:11-12, Paul admonished the believers to work with [their] hands. In II Thessalonians 3:10, Paul taught the principle: If any will not work, neither let him eat. While the THE AREAS OF THE BELIEVER

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local church does have a responsibility to help meet the needs of a member who is out of work because of circumstances beyond his control, it is not obliged to help anyone who is unwilling to work. If a believer chooses not to work or refuses a job because it is not to his liking, the church has no obligation to him. A believer is responsible for supporting his own family. If he cannot find a job to his liking, then he should work at something not to his liking. The church has no obligation to meet the needs of a lazy believer.

A third area is the believer's relationship to the church. Here, the New Testament makes at least six points:

- 1. There must be submission to the elders of the church (I Thess. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:7, 17).
- 2. The church is responsible for carrying out evangelism (Acts 1:8; Rom. 1:14, 16; II Cor. 5:18-20), and it must be to the Jew first (Rom. 1:16).
- 3. The church is responsible to love the brethren (Jn. 13:34-35; Rom. 12:9-10; Eph. 4:1-3; 5:2; I Thess. 4:9; Heb. 13:1; I Pet. 3:8-9; 4:8-9; I Jn. 3:14, 17; 4:7, 11).
- 4. Believers have obligations to their brothers and sisters (I Cor. 12:26; Eph. 4:31-32; 5:21; 6:18; Phil. 2:3-4; Col. 3:12-13; I Thess. 4:6; 5:11; Jas. 4:11; 5:16; I Pet. 5:5).
- 5. Strong believers have special responsibilities toward weak believers (Rom. 14:1-23).
- The spiritual believer has responsibilities toward erring believers (Rom. 16:17-18). He is to mark them out and make sure they cause no divisions. He is to seek their restoration (Gal. 6:1). He is to admonish them (I Thess. 5:14). And he is to withdraw from them if they persist in their erring ways (II Thess. 3:6, 11-15).

Conclusion

The rule of life of believers today combines the eternal principles of the Hebrew Scriptures with "the Law of the Messiah." While following rules is not the deciding factor of regeneration, which is based on grace through faith alone, knowing the rules and following them will lead to spiritual maturity. The mature believer possesses a knowledge of the Word of God (I Cor. 3:1-3; Heb. 5:14). Anyone who does not have knowledge of Scripture cannot be considered spiritual. The believer's spirituality will also show itself in his attitude. He will be characterized by a spirit of thanksgiving (Eph. 5:20) and unity of the Spirit with other believers (Eph. 4:3) and will have developed certain similarities to the Messiah (Gal. 2:20, 5:22; I Pet. 2:21; Jn. 15:4). Finally, the maturity of a spiritual believer will be evident in his day-to-day conduct (Eph. 4:1-16; Phil. 3:12-16; I Tim. 1:3-6). Unlike the carnal believer, the spiritually mature believer readily submits to "the Law of Messiah."





The Walk of the Believer: How to Talk the Talk

James, the half-brother of Yeshua and first pastor of the congregation in Jerusalem, wrote his epistle with two purposes in mind: to strengthen the church in light of coming persecution and to focus on practical, Spirit-filled living. He begins to develop this second purpose in chapter 1, verses 19-25. As Jacques Isaac Gabizon shows in this article, James encourages his readers to focus on conduct rather than creed, behavior rather than belief, deed rather than doctrine.



James 1:19-25 ¹⁹So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; ²⁰ for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.²¹Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.²⁵ But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

Especially new believers in Yeshua the Messiah often wonder how to live their life in God. James is very thorough in providing some insight, spelling out that the believers' words, actions, and thoughts are to reflect the One who saved them.

The passage studied in this article is simple and priceless, a treasure for those who want to improve their journey with God. It ends with the words: *this one will be blessed in what he does.* Should one follow God and His precepts, the blessings will spread through every facet of his or her life. God will open for them *the windows of heaven* and pour out for them *such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it* (Mal. 3:10).

Some of the things James points out are obvious; others are surprising because of their simplicity. First, James draws the attention to two expressions: the words we speak and the Word of God. Beginning with the words of man, James states that they become the mirror of a person's thoughts. They reflect the image of the believer's inner being. Sometimes, the words come out too fast or too harshly. They can hurt others or bless them. In either case, words are important to God, who hears them all. This is the beginning of a thorough teaching on this matter.

As for the Word of God, few probably fully realize the great power that emanates from the Bible. James, however, did realize it and in response elevated the Bible. In verse 18, he called the Scriptures the *word of truth*. Then, it is *the implanted word* (v. 21), a *mirror* (v. 23), the *perfect law* and the *law of liberty* (v. 25). Later, in 2:8, James will call it the *royal law*. By elevating the Word of God, James lifts God to the highest. In his teaching, God takes the first place.

Being concerned with the walk of the believer, James now presents a winning formula in verse 19, saying, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath. This is a rule of three: quick, slow, slow. Such rules were well known to James's readers. The rabbis often used them to communicate words of wisdom. In the Mishnah, their oral law, one of them said: "Know what is above you: (1) An eye which sees, and (2) an ear which hears, and (3) all your actions are written down in a book."1 In another section, a rabbi said, "On three things does the world stand: (1) On the Scriptures, (2) and on the Temple service, (3) and on deeds of loving kindness."2

While James uses the rule of three to make his point, he goes much further into the being of the individual and focuses on the spoken word. The word translated as "wrath" in verse 19 falls short of describing the full scope of the original Greek word, orge. Orge is used in reference to someone who is speaking or acting impulsively, unthoughtfully, and abruptly. The actual meaning of the word is "to swell with nourishing liquids and juices,"³ and the idea is that the person is so swollen of himself that he makes unwise decisions. Words just burst out of his being. Orge and impulsive reactions do not produce the righteousness of God, that is, they do not achieve or reflect our salvation, which God has freely given us. On the contrary, they do reproduce our own righteousness,

¹ *m. Pirque Abot* 2:10.

² m. Pirque Abot 1:2.

³ Etymological Dictionary of Greek, on ὀργή.



which is defective and often hurtful to others. The righteousness of God is Yeshua's righteousness, which He imparted on the believer after He died and rose again. This is the righteousness through which God sees us and that prevents the judgment from falling on us. Instead of reflecting our own righteousness to others, we ought to reflect Yeshua's righteousness.

James now admonishes his readers to lay aside *all filthiness and overflow of wickedness*. The word "overflow" may also be translated as "abundance." Paul uses the word for the of Yeshua's parable is James' dream for us. It is the soil which responds to the Word of God, the seed that is firmly implanted in the believer's being. Of this soil, Yeshua said in Matthew 13:23: But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Three things happen when the seed falls on fertile ground: The believer hears, understands, and produces fruit. Yeshua used the rule of three, and the words resemble those of the Word in meekness. The word "meekness" takes into consideration the power of the Word of God. In Greek, the noun is *prautes*, which means "the quality of not being overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance."⁴ Plato used *prautes* to describe the "golden mean" that brings a balanced life.⁵ There are people who know the Scriptures well, but they are not nice people. They use the Word as a weapon, bombarding others with verses and doctrines when they need love and compassion. The Bible first heals and comforts, and



abundance of grace (Rom. 5:17), the abundance of joy (II Cor. 8:2), and the abundance of faith (II Cor. 10:15). But James talks about the abundance of wickedness. A flood of angry words is simply not godly. Man is an intelligent being, but the Bible says that at the core, there is wickedness. It is only when we recognize the true core of our being that God can begin to change it. The remedy is to receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save . . . souls. The implanted word reminds us of the first parable of the kingdom, where the word of God is also compared to a seed. In the parable, a farmer sows the seed. The farmer is Yeshua, and the seed is the Word of God. However, not every soil, not every human heart, responds to the Word. The fourth soil James. "To hear" refers to the attitude of allowing the Spirit to work in one's heart. "To understand" correlates to being slow to speak and slow to wrath and seeking the meaning of the Word. It implies believing that the Bible is God's infallible Word. It also implies work and study—the best investment one can do while here on earth. "To bear and produce fruit" is the outcome of a yielded heart.

In order to bear fruit, the believer needs to *receive* this Word, as James says in verse 21. To receive is to acknowledge, welcome, grasp; while the Lord implanted the Word in the believer, the believer needs to welcome it, believe it, and trust it. This happens through faith.

James qualifies the attitude the hearer has to have: He has to receive

its words can only be given through humble and loving people.

Having discussed the implanted Word and how one is to receive it, James adds an expression that has disturbed the faith of many. He says that the implanted Word *is able to save . . . souls.* Here, salvation seems to be expressed in the future tense. Does this contradict the assurance of salvation? The Bible speaks of salvation past, present, and future; if one misses any of these steps, he will have a hard time making sense of the whole and will run the risk of falling into the hands of cults. The first step is called "justification." The believer has

⁴ A Greek-English Lexicon of the N.T. and Other Early Christian Literature, on πραϋτης (p. 861).

⁵ Bob Utley, *Jesus' Half-Brothers Speak: James and Jude*

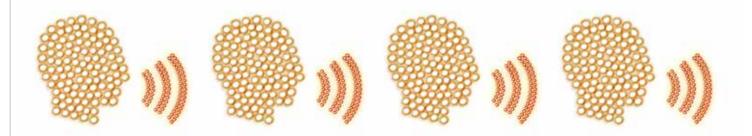


been saved forever, and as far as God is concerned, he has been justified through the righteousness of Yeshua. Hence, positionally, the believer is saved forever. The second step is called "sanctification." It describes the present work of salvation and is what James is referring to. Sanctification is a process that asks the believer to abide in the implanted Word of God. Paul puts this step more bluntly when he says, *work out your salvation with fear and trembling* (Phil. 2:12). The third step is still in the future. It is called the "glorification of man." This that believers ought to not just study the Word; they ought to put it to use. Amos put the same message in the following words: *A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken! Who can but prophesy?* (Amos 3:8) For him, reading the Word is like hearing a lion roar. If you walk down the street and hear a lion roaring, you will surely run as fast as you can for cover. In the same way, when one reads the Word, he understands it and believes it and cannot but become a doer of the Word.

James next makes an illustration.

appropriate changes in his or her life.

James put it this way in verses 23-24: he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror, but he immediately forgets what kind of man he was. James uses a powerful expression: the natural face. The Greek word translated as "natural" is geneseos, the root of the word "Genesis." It is also the origin of the word "genealogy" in Matthew 1:1. So, the "natural face" is the face of a person's birth, the face of his true nature. Because the Word of God is so powerful, it will reveal man as he is.



step happens during the rapture for those believers who are alive then and during the resurrection for those who already passed away. It is when the Lord will give His people a new, sinless, and eternal body. From this point forward, sin will have no more effect on the believer, who will be with the Lord forever and ever. By adding the expression "able to save souls" to the end of verse 21, James points out that the study of the implanted Word is essential and indispensable in the believer's sanctification.

He then details this point in the following verses, James 1:22-25. He begins by commanding his readers to be *doers of the Word* (v. 22). The expression does not describe a sporadic action, but may be translated as "Word-doer." James' argument is

He is very funny here! He says the one who hears the Word and does not do it is like one who sees himself in a mirror. He sees and recognizes that there is something on his face, but he does not remove it and goes about his business.

Imagine enjoying a nice and tasty plate of spaghetti with a rich, oily tomato sauce. You love it so much that you eat it all. After dinner, you pull out a mirror and see that you have a red bright ring around your lips and some tomato stains on your cheeks, but you don't wipe them off. You put back the mirror where it was, and you go on about your business with red spots on your face. Would this be nor- mal? This is someone who reads the Word of God, understands what it says, but does not do anything to make the In the first century, mirrors were very expensive and evidently very popular. Seneca, a Roman philosopher and writer of the times this letter of James was written, mocked Roman women for spending a lot of money on mirrors. The Jewish historian Josephus, also a contemporary of James, noted that these mirrors were made of the same polished metal as the lavers in the Tabernacle (Ex. 38:8).⁶

What could be the relationship? The lavers contained water with which priests washed themselves before performing any tasks for the Lord, and the process symbolized the second of the three steps of salvation, sanctification. These lavers were there for the cleansing of the priests, and they

⁶ Antiquities 12.81.



were also made out of metal mirrors. Just before a priest began his work, he would come close to the laver and right away see himself and surely fix up whatever was not right before performing any work. Interestingly, the lavers were the only items whose size were not given. Furthermore, they were placed right before the presence of God in the holy place. Only two items were in the outer court: First, there was the altar of sacrifice, where the animals were sacrificed, symbolizing the death of the Lamb of God, the Messiah. This is our salvation past. Once the priests passed the altar, they were confronted with their own image reflected in the laver. So, they would fix themselves up before entering the presence of God. In the laver was water, which is a symbol of the Word of God in the Bible. Today, the Lord is cleaning His church too, as it says in Ephesians 5:26: That He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word. Again, we see the sanctification by the Word. This is what James must have had in mind, for this mirror becomes the Word of God itself: But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work. this one will be blessed in what he does (v. 25). The work-doer does not look in a mirror, but at God's Word, which is the mirror of his soul.

James gives the Word of God two new titles, calling it the "perfect law" and the "law of liberty." Today, when we speak of the law to a believer, he may only think of the Mosaic Law, but James broadens our perspective. This is the first time of ten times James mentions this law, and for him the law of freedom and of perfection is the whole Bible.

The Greek word for "law" is nomos. It means "to allot," "to assign to someone what is proper." The connotation was not always negative. While it was used to describe the rules of a game or the laws of the state, it was also used to describe customs, traditions, marriages, and even the mode of singing a melody. James had this positive connotation in mind, and for him, the law is the whole Bible, including the Law of Moses. It is unfortunate that we only think of judgments and regulations when we speak of the Mosaic Law. These rules were only a fence around a beautiful law of the Lord. We remember David, how he lifted up the Torah that is Hebrew for "law."

Today, the word "Torah" is used to describe the first five books of Moses. In his famous chapter on the Word of God, Psalm 119, David used the word "Torah" 25 times, saying:

Wondrous things from Your Torah (v. 18) I delight in Your Torah (v. 70)

Your Torah is my delight (v. 77)

Oh, how I love Your Torah

(vv. 97, 113, 163)

Your Torah is truth (v. 142)

Your Torah is my delight (v. 147)

What David saw in the Law of God, James also saw, and he extends it to all the Scriptures. For him, it is the perfect law because it contains everything a believer needs to know about life and this world. It explains how this world was created, how sin entered this world, how one attains salvation, where this world is heading, and what happens after death.

James also calls the Scriptures "the law of freedom." God's Word tells us how to obtain salvation from sin, thus freeing us from the powerful effect of sin. Furthermore, the study of the Scriptures will open up one's understanding and perspective of this age and will bring about great blessings on the life of the individual, as James says in verse 25: *this one will be blessed in what he does.* This is the secret of great life here on earth.

Rabbinical Judaism also teaches the freedom one may gain from studying the Word of God. For instance, in the Talmud, one rabbi quoted Exodus 32:16, which says: *The tablets* [that is the ten commandments] *were God's work, and the writing was God's writing engraved on the tablets.* The word for "engraved" is *haruth*, and so the Talmud says: "Read not *haruth* (graven) but *heruth* (freedom), They are spelled the same way - for you find no free man except him who occupies himself with the study of Torah."⁷

What then is this perfect law of freedom? As opposed to other laws, we are not bound to it by commandments, but by love. It is the law of God, the law of love. James develops this law in the following chapters of his epistle. For now, he encourages his readers to intently study this law, as opposed to only gazing at it. The word "intently" means "to bend over," just like when Mary stooped and looked into the empty tomb (Jn. 20:11). Any approach to the holy Word of God should be done with a humble mind, a bowing spirit, and not like the man who, every time he looks at a mirror, bows down to himself. The bowing is to God. According to James 1:26-27, the perfect law of freedom produces godly and pure religion. A religion is a service to God; it is the expression of

⁷ m. Pirque Abot 6:2b.



our love and devotion to God. How, then, is our religion?

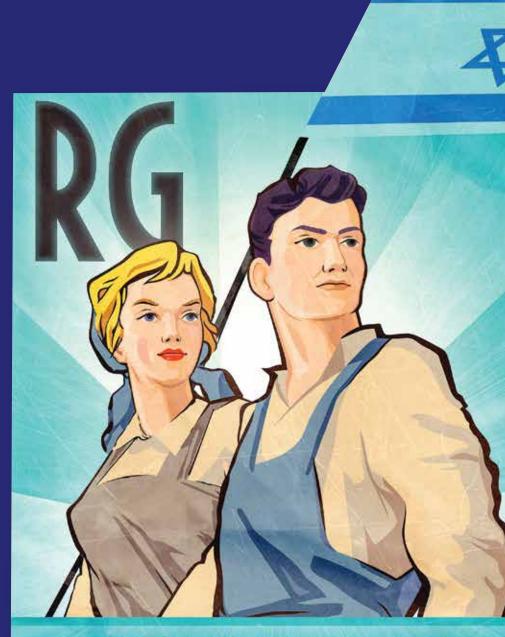
As James began this section, so he ends it: with the power of the tongue. One cannot just say and not do; pure religion is one of action, of deeds. If we see someone in need, it is not enough to say that we are going to pray for them when we can do something for them.

In conclusion, several points can be made. First, God asks the believer to be a doer of the Word, not only a hearer, a perpetual student. Second, James uplifts the Word of God and asks the believer to be humble when he reads and studies it. Third, it is important to be quick to hear, but to not allow our emotions, our feelings, our impulses to dictate our path. There is nothing wrong with emotions and feelings, but they should not lead the way. Fourth, James compares the Bible to a mirror, for it is in there that human beings can understand themselves. Fifth, he encourages the believer to carefully study the Scriptures and its laws and apply them. One without the other will not work well. A believer becomes a professional doer of the Word by realizing that the seed of the Word that God implanted in him needs daily watering and good care.





ANTI-SEMITISM The Time To Be a Righteous Gentile Is Today!



THE TIME TO BE A RIGHTEOUS GENTILE IS TODAY!

AFTER WORLD WAR II. AS EUROPE WAS COMING TO GRIPS WITH THE HORRORS OF THE HOLOCAUST, IT BECAME **EVIDENT THAT WHILE** MOST OF THE WORLD TURNED ITS BACK ON THE JEWS, SOME PEOPLE FOUND IT IN THEIR HEARTS TO HELP. IT WAS **EXPECTED THAT JEWISH PEOPLE WOULD HELP** THEIR OWN AND THEY DID BUT HELP ALSO CAME FROM GENTILES. BY 1953, ONLY SIX YEARS AFTER THE WAR. ISRAEL DECIDED TO START GATHERING **INFORMATION ABOUT** THOSE GENTILES WHO HELPED JEWS DURING THE HOLOCAUST YEARS. THE PLAN WAS TO RECOGNIZE THEM AS RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS.





Three criteria were established:

- 1. They were not Jewish.
- 2. They risked their own lives by their actions.
- 3. They received no money in exchange for their deeds.

In 2019, Yad Vashem recognizes fewer than 27,000 Gentiles worldwide as being righteous in this way. In the scope of the six million innocent Jewish victims of the Nazi death camps, this is a drop in the ocean. And what about modern-day "Righteous Gentiles"? Do they exist? Who are they, and where are they?

In light of anti-Semitism's global rebirth, we need modern-day Righteous Gentiles more than ever before. I am convinced that at the rate Jewish hatred is growing, it won't be long before the global Jewish community will need help from outside once again. In some ways, we are already there, when we consider the attacks in Pittsburg, San Diego, New York, and the numerous – almost daily – incidents in Europe. How can we identify the Righteous Gentiles of today?

They read their Bible, and they believe God's plan for Israel.

When we read our Bible and avoid allegorizing the stories that God gave us, we cannot help but discover a theme which is woven through the Scriptures: Israel and the Jewish people from early in Genesis all the way to Revelation, and almost on every page of the Bible. This is not to say that one must read the Bible to love the Jewish people. There were and still are many people who might not be religious or have any spiritual connection to Israel but still have nothing against the Jewish people. People of good will have always existed. Yet, I do believe that modern Righteous Gentiles will have a greater propensity to help the Jews if they read their Bible. Taken literally, the story of Israel and the Jewish people is based on promises and covenants made between the God of Israel and various leaders of Israel. Except for the Mosaic Covenant (parallel to all the others AND conditional), these covenants are all connected, unconditional, and based on God's unchanging character.

They love the Jewish people.

Today's Righteous Gentiles, biblically motivated or not, simply love the Jewish people. They recognize Israel's existence against all odds and often contrary to human logic. There are a lot of Bible believers that could be "Christian called Zionists." They believe in God's plan for Israel and in the restoration of the Jewish people in the land of Israel in the end times (Ezek. 36-37). To an extent, that return to Eretz Yisrael has already begun, and Bible believers live with a great expectation of God's fulfillment of His promises. When one believes in the God of the Bible, it is hard not to love the Jewish people.

They live their Bible.

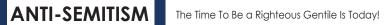
One important aspect of the Righteous Gentiles is that they not only believe the Bible, but they also live it daily. While no Bible believer is made instantaneously perfect by following the teachings of Yeshua of Nazareth, they are encouraged to live for Him and through Him. As a result, Righteous Gentiles strive to apply biblical principles to their own lives, just like the people of the French village of Le Chambon did during World War II. Somebody once said, "Preach the good news every day. If necessary, use words!" Our actions ought to be enough to demonstrate what we believe and why we believe it. Words are good, but actions are better!

They will take risks to protect the Jewish people.

Righteous Gentiles will not hesitate to help the Jewish people when the time of trouble comes, and the time is coming! There is no doubt in my mind that even though the Bible is replete with God's positive promises for Israel and the Jewish people, things are going to get worse before they get better. Righteous Gentiles took great risks eighty years ago to hide, protect, and save Jews. Today's Righteous Gentiles are ready to do the same, but most Jewish people are not aware of it. Jewish people today need to be made aware that there are Gentiles who are their friends. Not every Gentile is an anti-Semite! Yet, it is becoming increasingly difficult for Jewish people today to know where to turn for help and whom to trust.



This certificate of honor was awarded to Maria Kotarba for risking her life to save the lives of Jewish prisoners in two Nazi concentration camps.



26

If you are a Gentile, ask yourself the following questions, and if your answer is yes, then you might be a Righteous Gentile awaiting his or her call to reach out to God's chosen people.

- Do you believe the Bible's promises for
- Israel and the Jewish people will be fulfilled literally?
- Do you believe the Jewish people are at risk again?
- Are you willing to take risks to help your Jewish friends?

While I do not believe that Bible believers will go through the horrors of the tribulation, in Matthew 25:40, we see how serious Yeshua is about the way Gentiles should treat Jews. At the end of that seven-year period of perilous times, Gentiles who survived the tribulation and helped Jews in the process will be recognized by Yeshua, and the King will say to them: Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me. These Righteous Gentiles will not earn their entrance into God's kingdom because they protected Jews during the tribulation, but their actions will simply demonstrate that they had become believers during that time, leading them to make the right choices.

We are clearly living in the end times, and the time to be a Righteous Gentile is today. Unbeknownst to them, the Jewish people are counting on you! So, if you know of a demonstration against Israel or the Jewish people near you, start a counter-demonstration. If you become aware of local Jewish monuments, Jewish art, or Jewish cemeteries having been vandalized, call and offer your help, go, organize a group of faithful believers, and clean up the mess. And most importantly, share the good news of the Jewish Messiah with your Jewish friends and coworkers, for in God's eyes, a Righteous Gentile is one who provokes the Jewish people to jealousy (Rom. 11:11)!



Memorial tree in Jerusalem, honoring Irena Sendler, a Polish Catholic nurse who saved 2,500 Jews.



People recognized as "Righteous Among the Nations" are awarded a specially minted medal bearing their name, a certificate of honor, and the privilege of their names being added to the Wall of Honor in the Garden of the Righteous at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.



A Righteous Among the Nations award ceremony in the Polish Senate, 2012.



Names and Numbers of Righteous Among the Nations per Country and Ethnic Origin

The numbers in this table are not necessarily an indication of the actual number of rescuers in each country, but they reflect the cases that were made available to Yad Vashem. The table was updated by Yad Vashem on January 1, 2019.

Albania	75	Denmark*	22	Italy	714	Romania	66
Armenia	24	Ecuador	1	Japan	1	Russia	209
Austria	110	Egypt	1	Latvia	138	Serbia	139
Belarus	660	El Salvador	1	Lithuania	904	Slovakia	602
Belgium	1,751	Estonia	3	Luxembourg	1	Slovenia	15
Bosnia	47	France	4,099	Macedonia	10	Spain	9
Brazil	2			Moldova	79	Sweden	10
Bulgaria	20	Georgia	1	Montenegro	1	Switzerland	49
Chile	2	Germany	627	Netherlands	5,778	Turkey	1
China	2	Greece	355	Norway	67	Ukraine	2,634
Croatia	118	Hungary	867	Peru	2	United Kingdo	om 22
Cuba	1	Indonesia	2	Poland	6,992	USA	5
Czech Repub	olic 118	Ireland	1	Portugal	3	Vietnam	1

Total: 27,362

* The title of Righteous is awarded to individuals, not to groups. The members of the Danish resistance viewed the rescue operation as a collective act and therefore asked Yad Vashem not to recognize resistance members individually. Yad Vashem respected their request and consequently the number of Danish Righteous is relatively small. A tree was planted on the Mount of Remembrance to commemorate the Danish resistance.

"About the Righteous: Statistics." *Names of Righteous* by Country. Yad Vashem The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority. 1 January 2019. Retrieved June 3, 2019.





Philippe Mayu, the author of this testimony, has faithfully served Ariel Ministries as a translator for many years. In the article, he shares his experience during a protest for the rights of Israel. His testimony is an example for the kind of involvement Olivier Melnick calls for in his article. It is meant as food for thought for all of us to live out our faith by visibly fighting against the new anti-Semitism that is sweeping our globe.



"Enough is Enough" was the title of a rally for equal rights that was held at the United Nations in Geneva on March 18th. I was present at the meeting to stand for Israel. The reason for protesting? The UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is presently making an unprecedented assault on the rights of Israel. Specifically:

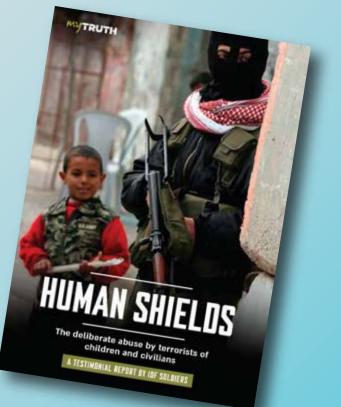
- It criticizes only Israel, under its biased Agenda Item 7. No other country is singled out this way.
- Israel is being attacked in seven biased reports. There are zero reports on abuses by China, Turkey, Cuba, and most other of the world's worst regimes.
- A new Commission of Inquiry falsely accuses Israeli soldiers of "crimes against humanity" and calls for their arrest for defending the Gaza border from Hamas terrorists.

During the rally, the demonstrators demanded the following:

- Equal rights for the people of Israel
- The end to the prejudice and injustice of the UN's demonization of the Jewish state, which betrays the UN's own founding values
- That the UN stop encouraging terrorists, but instead support peace, democracy, and human rights

Several hundred people attended the rally. At one of the stands, one could get a very interesting booklet titled *Human Shields, The deliberate abuse by terrorists of children and civilians.* The booklet is a compilation of 31 testimonies of IDF soldiers who were part of different combat units that fought Hamas from 2002 to 2018. These soldiers talk about their experiences with the terrorists of Hamas. They share how the IDF, with its very high moral code, is confronted by the abject methods of Hamas, who uses children, women, seniors, handicapped civilians, and civil and medical facilities for their terrorist activities, in particular as human shields.

Human Shields is very effective in fighting the "fake news" concerning IDF which are poured out over the world by most of the media, and so, I asked Yoav Mor, the editor of the booklet, if he would be interested in having a French version of the testimonies. Not many people in France speak English, and disinformation is highly present in this country. Yoav accepted, and I just sent him the French version of the booklet (available at https://mytruth.org.il/en/).





THE HEBREW ROOTS MOVEMENT: GOOD OR BAD? By Mottel Baleston

controversial than ever. It is usually referred to as the "Hebrew Roots movement," or alternatively as the "Jewish Roots movement." Its

movement," or alternatively as the "Jewish Roots movement." Its supporters claim that it restores the original theological context of the first century church, a Hebrew/Jewish context. Its critics claim that the movement brings nothing but conflict, false doctrine, and divides churches.

In recent years, a

growing movement

among believers in Jesus

has become more

prominent and more

HEBREW ROOTS MOVEMENT





We have entitled this article simply "The Hebrew Roots Movement: Good or Bad?" If you were hoping that the answer to this question was a single simple word, just think about the following question: "The Church Growth movement: good or bad?" That question doesn't have a single answer because the Church Growth movement is different from location to location, varies in doctrine and practice, and can be done biblically or non-biblically. So instead of ending this article now with a single word, it really is necessary to do a bit of education and talk about the reason that the Hebrew Roots movement got started, which forms it takes, the potential good in it, and some very real downsides and cautions.

This article will not be theoretical because for over thirty years I have lived through many of the discussions and debates about this movement and have had a part in implementing it in a good way in the Messianic congregations I have led. At the same time, I have also been called to step in and clean up the mess in some places where this movement has had bad results.

I write from the perspective of a Jewish believer who embraces grace and from a conservative evangelical theological position. Since I come from a strongly Jewish heritage, you might expect that I would naturally embrace the Hebrew Roots movement. However, the most important question for myself is the answer to the question: "Is it biblically correct?" So, in this article, I will identify the parts in the movement that are helpful and will voice my serious concerns when parts of the movement violate Scripture.

Broadly speaking, people who have a strong Hebrew Roots orientation can either be found in Messianic congregations of various kinds (but often meet in small home groups) or do not attend anywhere regularly because they are highly critical of every fellowship they have seen.

Here is a surprise: The majority of the people who strongly embrace and participate in the Hebrew Roots movement are not Jewish! Most often, they are non-Jewish ethnically, have been raised with some amount of church participation, or even have been involved in a biblically sound church at one time. What is common to them all is that they have become aware of just how far Christendom has drifted from its original Jewish roots, and this has alarmed them.

Let's pause and make a simple and factual statement: True biblical Christianity would not exist without its Jewish/Hebrew roots. The Jesus Christ of Christian faith was born of a Jewish mother, into a Jewish home, in the Jewish town of Bethlehem, which was in the Jewish province of Judea. He spent His childhood and young adult years in the Jewish synagogue (Lk. 4:16). When He came forward to announce that He was the long-expected Jewish Messiah, He did so in that synagogue setting in Nazareth. It was the Hebrew Jewish prophets who predicted the coming of God's Messiah, not Greek philosophers. When the church ignores these truths, people notice and become curious as to the reasons. This is the core of what has given birth to the Jewish/Hebrew Roots movement.

The ministry of Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum and Ariel Ministries came into being with the following goals: to present Yeshua as Messiah to His own Jewish people and lead to their salvation, see them discipled and growing in faith, and educate the church accurately regarding the Jewish roots of our faith.

So, in one sense, Ariel Ministries has been identified with the Hebrew Roots movement. However, the last twenty years has seen a sharp increase in bad doctrine and even heresy among some in the movement. When certain leaders confuse law and grace, telling believers they need to keep Mosaic Law to have God's favor, Ariel Ministries' publications have been quick to call out this serious error. I have watched some in the Hebrew Roots movement end their friendship with Dr. Fruchtenbaum and speak ill of him because he would not endorse the false idea of mandatory Mosaic Law observance. At the same time, Dr. Fruchtenbaum's clear stand for biblical truth has emboldened those of us who are his students to stand up publicly in defense of New Covenant grace, even as we lead Messianic Jewish congregations.



So, if you are still reading, you now recognize that there is both good and bad within the current Hebrew Roots movement. Here is a simple chart that summarizes the current scene:



POSITIVES ABOUT THE HEBREW ROOTS MOVEMENT:

- A Reminds the church of the continuing importance of its Jewish roots
- ☆ Allows Christians to be enriched by the Jewish holy days and their Messianic significance
- ☆ Encourages us to search the Scriptures instead of being ruled by church tradition

CAUTIONS ABOUT THE HEBREW ROOTS MOVEMENT:

- ☆ Some imagine that we are obligated to keep Mosaic Law.
- Some dismiss or radically reinterpret the epistles of Paul to denigrate grace.
- Some insist on Sabbath observance and belittle those who worship on Sunday.
- Some hold that they have an insight into truth that no other believers have.
- Some won't use the names Jesus/Yeshua and insist on "Yahoshuah" or variations.
- And very sadly, some even question the deity of Messiah Yeshua.

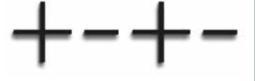
All the above has resulted in deep fractures and permanent divisions within the movement. As a result, the only thing various parts of the movement share is an understanding and valuing of the Jewish origins of Christianity and trying to include these in their beliefs and practice. Beyond these commonalities, every part of the movement stands independently and answers to no one else. As a result, in my circle of Bible-believing, grace-embracing Jewish and Gentile friends, we now hesitate to even identify ourselves as part of the Hebrew Roots movement.

That term has now become synonymous with those who are combative and cause divisions in congregations. Other oddities now seen in the movement are:

- A belief that the New Testament was originally written in Aramaic, not Greek. This allows them to ignore the parts of the text that do not agree with their doctrines.
- A demand that its followers send tithes to one particular leader.
- A growing separation and open hostility toward all evangelical churches.
- And most oddly of all, a small number of the Hebrew Roots sects which are made up entirely of Gentile believers are now openly critical of Jewish people and have taken hold of the cultic false doctrine that the Jewish people today are not actually Jewish. There is an actual anti-Semitic tone in some of their websites, as they imagine that they alone are the true Israel of God.

To conclude, we need to look beyond simple labels and recognize that the Hebrew Roots movement has identified a missing element among many churches: the Jewish roots of the faith. At the same time, we should not be blind to the very real errors and false practices in other parts of the movement.

May God allow us to be wise by not joining in the fads of the day, but rather in searching the Scriptures, being appreciative of the Jewish roots of our faith in Messiah, enriched by them, and ultimately looking unto Messiah Yeshua, who alone is the author and finisher of our faith (Heb. 12:2).





THEOLOGY What is Progressive Dispensationalism?



Covenant Postmillennialism Covenant Millennialism Premillennialism What is poor

Dispensationalism

In recent times, Ariel Ministries has received multiple emails with questions pertaining to progressive dispensationalism. In this article, David James offers a comprehensive overview of the doctrine, showing clearly where it differs from the dispensationalism Ariel Ministries adheres to. The article is based on a chapter in *What Is Dispensationalism*, a book published by Grace Abroad Ministries in 2018. The text has been edited and slightly modified to better fit the format of our magazine.

THEOLOGY

Progressive dispensationalism, although gaining many adherents from within the dispensational camp over the last 25 years or so, remains one of those theological issues that can be difficult to fully grasp, even for Bible scholars who have spent a lot of time working to understand it. In the research for this article, this author found a wide range of understanding (and misunderstanding) among those who were both writing about progressive dispensationalism itself, as well as about how it compares with other forms of dispensationalism. now-classic book *Dispensationalism*, did offer a helpful definition:

Progressive dispensationalism (1) teaches that Christ is already reigning in heaven on the throne of David, thus merging the church with a present phase of the already inaugurated Davidic covenant and kingdom; (2) this is based on a complementary hermeneutic that allows the New Testament to introduce changes and additions to Old Testament revelation; and (3) the overall purpose of God is Christological, holistic redemption being the focus and goal of history.1

Charles Ryrie also noted that progressive dispensationalism's "public debut was made on November 20, 1986, in the Dispensational Study Group in connection with the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society

This presents a number of challenges for finding a clear and concise definition. As an example, even the first major book on the subject, *Progressive Dispensationalism* (1993), has no definition per se, even in the chapter specifically devoted to explaining progressive dispensationalism. However, based upon his research, noted dispensationalist Charles Ryrie, in his

(ETS) in Atlanta, Georgia." while the term "progressive dispensationalism" was first used at the 1991 ETS meeting.² The term "progressive" has to do with the relationship between dispensations—namely that there is more continuity than discontinuity, and that each dispensation advances or builds upon previous dispensations in a *progressive way*. The theologians most responsible for laying the groundwork for progressive dispensationalism are Darrell Bock, Craig Blaising, and Robert Saucy.

Because progressive dispensationalism is a development in the history of dispensationalism, it can only be understood by comparing and contrasting it with other schools of dispensational thought. However, it must be noted that dispensationalism has never been static and has gone through a continuous process of development, revision, and refinement. Therefore, one cannot assume that all who are identified with a particular form of dispensationalism would agree on every detail.

The first school of thought in dispensationalism has been identified as "classic dispensationalism." Adherents would include J.N. Darby, C.I. Scofield, and L.S. Chafer (although some dispensationalists would argue that there are significant differences between the views of these three men as well). Although Ryrie would not be considered a classic dispensationalist, he identified three sine guibus non (absolutes, essentials) of dispensationalism-which would apply to classic dispensationalism as well. They are 1) understanding that Israel and the church are distinct in God's program, with unique purposes and roles in the past, present, and future; 2) the use of a literal, grammatical, historical hermeneutic (method of interpretation)-which is sometimes identified as simply a "literal herme-

¹ Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, Revised and Expanded (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1995), 192.

² Ibid., 189.



neutic," or perhaps better a "normal" or "normative hermeneutic;" and 3) the underlying purpose of God in the world is to bring glory to Himself³ (to which this author would add, "through establishing an eternal kingdom of righteousness").

Classic dispensationalism would further recognize that God has revealed a series of phases (dispensations) that involve how He administrates His unfolding plan in different ways, with different purposes, at different times in history. Classic dispensationalism would also hold that the rapture of the church will occur prior to a seven-year period of God's judgment on the earth (Daniel's 70th week), after which the Messiah will return to establish a kingdom that will last for 1,000 years, during which time God will fulfill all of His promises concerning Israel, the church, and the nations.

The second major phase in the development of dispensationalism has been variously identified as "traditional," "revised," and "normative dispensationalism." More well-known adherents would include John Walvoord. Charles Ryrie, and J. Dwight Pentecost. Normative dispensationalism would largely hold to the major tenets of classic dispensationalism, while also lending developments, revisions, and refinements to certain aspects of the earlier view. For example, while classic dispensationalists saw two different eternal destinies for the two peoples of God (Israel on earth and

the church in heaven), normative dispensationalists have suggested that all of the redeemed, while maintaining distinctions, would together inhabit either the new earth (McClain, Pentecost, Hoyt) or heaven (Walvoord, Ryrie) throughout eternity.⁴

Another development was that normative dispensationalists tended to move away from some of the typology of classic dispensationalism (that had opened it to the charge of employing a spiritual hermeneutic)⁵ in favor of embracing a more strictly literal hermeneutic (or perhaps preferably, a more "normal" hermeneutic). In addition, the recognition that a sharp distinction between the "kingdom of heaven" versus the "kingdom of God," as a way to maintain the eternal duality of citizenship between Israel and the church, was seen as something that could not be maintained exegetically.6

Progressive dispensationalism is a further theological development in the history of dispensationalism that shares common ground with both classic and revised dispensationalism at certain points, while also departing from those in some very important respects. In fact, because of this divergence, many dispensationalists would consider progressive dispensationalism as a departure from historic dispensationalism rather than being merely a further development. At the same time, some covenant theologians tend to view progressive dispensationalism favorably because they,

too, see it as a move in their direction by dispensationalism.

Charles Ryrie has summarized the major tenets of progressive dispensationalism as follows:

 The kingdom of God is the unifying theme of biblical history.
Within biblical history, there are four dispensational eras.

3. Messiah has already inaugurated the Davidic reign in heaven at the right hand of the Father, which equals the throne of David, though He does not yet reign as Davidic king on earth during the millennium.

4. Likewise, the new covenant has already been inaugurated, though its blessings are not yet fully realized until the millennium. 5. The concept of the church as completely distinct from Israel and as a mystery unrevealed in the Old Testament needs revising, making the idea of two purposes and two peoples of God invalid.

6. A complementary hermeneutic must be used alongside a literal hermeneutic. This means that the New Testament makes complementary changes to Old Testament promises without jettisoning those original promises.

7. The one divine plan of holistic redemption encompasses all people and all areas of human life—personal, societal, cultural, and political.⁷

³ Ibid., 48.

- ⁵ Ibid.
- 6 Ibid., 39.
- ⁷ Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 193.

⁴ Craig Blaising, Darrell Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1993), 32.

THEOLOGY

Progressive dispensationalism's common ground with classical and normative/revised dispensationalism would include a commitment to a literal, grammatical, historical hermemaintaining a distinction neutic. between Israel and the church (at least to a certain degree), understanding that there are phases (dispensations) in God's program, as well as premillennialism. However, these areas of common ground need to be further qualified and explained because what progressive dispensationalists mean in each case is not precisely what has been historically understood by most dispensationalists of previous generations.

For example, according to Bock and Blaising, "Progressive dispensationalism is a development of 'literal' interpretation into a more consistent historical-literary interpretation."8 This "development" has been identified as hermeneutics" "complementary because, as those authors put it in Dispensationalism, Israel, and the Church, "the New Testament does introduce change and advance; it does not merely repeat Old Testament revelation. In making complementary additions, however, it does not jettison old promises. The enhancement is not at the expense of the original promise."9 Earlier in that book, Bock writes, "Old Testament promise has not been replaced; it has been opened up, clarified, expanded, and periodized in the progress of apostolic reflection on Jesus' teaching and actions."¹⁰

In other words, the meaning of Old Testament passages is not restricted to the original authorial intent and context, but can be and was, on occaby Yeshua sion, re-appropriated and/or New Testament authors to reveal entirely new interpretations that would never have been imagined hundreds of years earlier by the original readers. This stands in contrast to the hermeneutic that has historically been used by dispensationalists, most of whom would argue that the meaning of any passage is fixed at the time of writing and that any apparent differences in the New Testament involved application rather than interpretation.

Another major issue is that progressive dispensationalism blurs the distinctions between Israel and the church. While progressive dispensationalists do tend to see that Israel and the church are distinct in the present dispensation, they do not maintain the absolute distinction between these two peoples of God, in either the millennial kingdom or in eternity, as have previous dispensationalists.

In contrast to most other dispensationalists, progressive dispensationalists do not hold to the mysterious nature of the church in the Old Testament, but rather contend that the church was merely "unrealized" (as opposed to hidden).¹¹ Furthermore, progressive dispensationalists tend to see Israel and the church blending into one people of God, both in the millennial kingdom and in eternity future. "The prophetic promises envision Christ ruling forever over the nations of the redeemed. The church is not another 'people-group' in that picture."¹²

This blurring of distinctions between Israel and the church is one reason why (at least some) covenant theologians see dispensationalism, as a whole, moving in their direction. This author would agree with that assessment, as progressive dispensationalism seems to be steadily gaining more adherents over time.

In what appears to be another significant move toward covenant theology, Bock and Blaising write, "Progressive dispensationalists understand the dispensations not simply as different arrangements between God and humankind, but as successive arrangements in the progressive revelation and accomplishment of redemption. Consequently, the dispensations progress by revealing different aspects of the final unified redemption."13 The view that redemption is the unifying theme of the Bible is completely consistent with covenant theology, while most earlier dispensationalists would tend to see the theocratic kingdom as a more comprehensive unifying theme. Once again, progressive dispensationalists tend to have more in

13 Ibid., 48.

⁸ Ibid., 52.

⁹ Craig Blaising, *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church: The Search for Definition*, Kindle Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 6991–6993.

¹⁰ Ibid., 959–961.

¹¹ Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 205.

¹² Craig Blaising, Darrell Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, 50.



common with covenant theologians than dispensationalism, in general.

Another difference between progressive dispensationalism and classic, as well as normative dispensationalism, is that while most dispensationalists tend to hold to six, seven, or sometimes eight distinct dispensations, progressive dispensationalists generally hold to a different structure when it comes to determining dispensations. Bock and Blaising have identified four dispensations: 1) Patriarchal (to Sinai), 2) Mosaic (to the Messiah's ascension), 3) Ecclesial (to Messiah's return), and 4) Zionic (the millennial kingdom and the eternal state).14 This structure raises several questions. For example, with regard to the Patriarchal dispensation-The patriarchs of whom? The human race? They seem to trace the Patriarchal dispensation back to Adam. If so, then what about the patriarchs of Israel and the fact that God raised up a new nation that had never existed before after the judgment at the Tower of Babel? This seems to diminish, once again, the uniqueness of Israel. With regard to the Ecclesial dispensation, if it runs all the way to the return of the Messiah, does this mean the Messiah's return in the clouds of the air (i.e., the rapture of the church in 1 Thess. 4:13-18) or to the earth (i.e., the second coming in Rev. 19:11-16)?

This also highlights another potential problem with progressive dispensationalism, and that is a lack of clear definition and emphasis with regard to the timing of the rapture relative to Daniel's 70th Week. While many progressive dispensationalists may hold to a pre- tribulational rapture, the timing is not seen as a crucial component to their system.

Perhaps the greatest point of contention between normative and progressive dispensationalists involves the Davidic Covenant. Since progressive dispensationalism relies heavily upon an "already/not yet" paradigm regarding the covenants, it sees at least a partial fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant in the present dispensation, which includes the view that Messiah is presently ruling from the throne of David in heaven. They would contend that Messiah's rule as the Davidic king was inaugurated at His ascension and that His present reign is the first stage of His Davidic rule, with the second stage to take place during the millennial kingdom.¹⁵

Historically, however, the consistent view of dispensationalists has been that the throne of David is earthly, with headquarters in Jerusalem, and therefore will not be occupied by the Son of David, Yeshua, until He returns (Rev. 19) to set up His kingdom on the earth. Furthermore, there is no scriptural evidence that the throne of David is in heaven or that the Messiah is presently ruling from heaven. On the other hand, some covenant theologians, such as George E. Ladd, have held that Yeshua's exaltation to the right hand of the Father represents His enthronement as King based on Peter's use of Psalm 132:11 and 110:1-the same argument made by Bock and Blaising in defense of their view.16

However, in the case of Psalm 132:11, just two verses later we read: For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place (Ps. 132:13). The first mention of "Zion" in Scripture is 2 Samuel 5:7: Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion (that is, the City of David). This seems to make it clear that an earthly rather than a heavenly reign is in view. Likewise, Psalm 110:2 also seems to suggest that the author has an earthly reign in mind: *The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies!*

In conclusion, this author would agree that progressive dispensationalism is a departure from dispensationalism in general, rather than just a further development.

Among any number of things that could be noted, a number of the most important issues would include 1) the method of interpretation that is used (which adds "complementary hermeneutics" to the literal, grammatical, historical hermeneutic of classical and normative dispensationalism), 2) the blurring of the distinction between Israel and the church in the millennial kingdom and in eternity, 3) diminishing the significance of the timing of the rapture of the church, and 4) the contention that the Messiah is presently ruling from the Davidic throne, which is seen to be in heaven, as opposed to being strictly tied to an earthly kingdom. These are important issues that cannot be dismissed as inconsequential developments.

¹⁶ Ibid., 197.

¹⁴ Ibid., 123.

¹⁵ Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 196.



Summary

Progressive dispensationalism began in the 1980s as a departure from dispensationalism.

Progressive dispensationalism abandons consistent grammatical-historical hermeneutics by adding a complementary hermeneutic.

Progressive dispensationalism accepts some of covenant theology's methods, such as the "already/not yet" view of the kingdom.

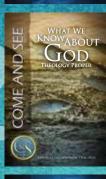
Progressive dispensationalism accepts some conclusions from the eschatology of dispensationalism but blurs definitive distinctions.



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David James is a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary and the founder and the Executive Director of The Alliance for Biblical Integrity, an apologetics and discernment ministry that focuses on promoting biblical hermeneutics. As a missionary, he was the founding director of the Word of Life Hungary Bible Institute from 1992 to 2009. He and his wife Karen have two children and four grandchildren.

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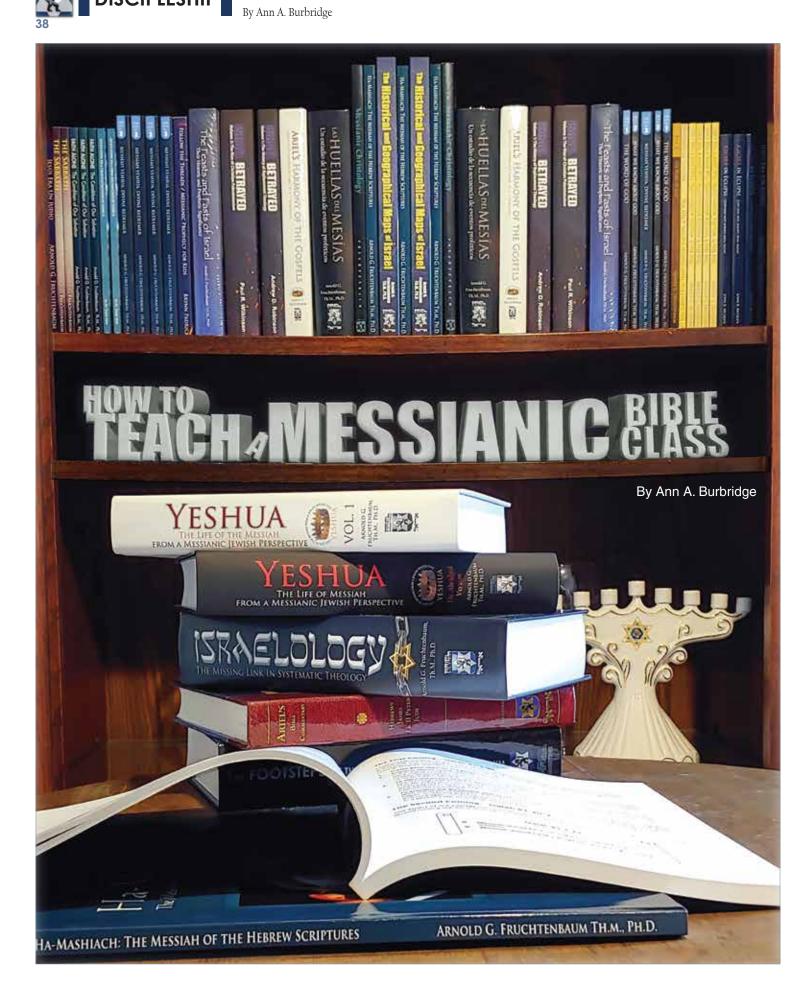




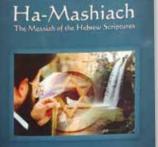


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Ariel Ministries is devoted to discipling believers and equipping them with a solid knowledge of God's Word. Many of those who have learned to appreciate the Messianic perspective of our material and classes feel called to pass their knowledge on to others. One such sister is Ann Burbridge, an instructor of music theory. For years, she has led women's Bible studies, and in order to do so, she has developed teaching material and student manuals. In this article, she shares her experience in hopes to prove that teaching others what one has learned is not rocket science, but a very worthy cause for all who are not ashamed of the good news, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who trusts—to the Jew first and

also to the Greek. (Rom. 1:16, TLV)

The common practice for many churches and Messianic communities in conducting a Bible study is to take a topical approach and to share experiences. While there is a place for this kind of outreach, the in-depth study of the Bible/Scripture sometimes remains on the shelf untouched. Our class used Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum's Ha-Mashiach, an in-depth study of the Old Testament prophecies about the first coming of Messiah. Some of the prophecies also include aspects of Messiah's second coming, but the focus is on the first coming. As an instructor, I began to realize this could be an excellent source to begin a college-style class in small steps as the chapters are basically self-contained studies. Class conversations sought answers to questions such as:

Do we have to know Hebrew?

Are we going to study these prophecies from a Jewish perspective?

How will this help in witnessing to the Jewish non-believer or any non-believer?

I told my students we would only study Hebrew words and terms that present interpretation challenges in understanding the true meaning of the prophecy according to Ha-Mashiach. I put examples of pertinent Hebrew text on my PowerPoint for instruction and discussion. This part of the class was very interesting to the students, and I discovered they were starting to learn Hebrew letters and a few common words in the text. The answer to "Do we have to learn Hebrew" is no, but more than likely you will pick up some Hebrew words! The chapter titled "Born of a Virgin," which deals with Isaiah 7:14, includes three pertinent studies on Hebrew words that are sometimes translated "virgin" and sometimes not:

- 1. Na'a'rah: used to refer to virgins or non-virgins
- 2. Betulah: commonly considered to mean "virgin," but requires qualifying text to substantiate its real meaning, virgin or non-virgin
- 3. Almah: used seven times in the Hebrew Scriptures and needs no further qualification to mean "virgin"

Dr. Fruchtenbaum verifies that of the three terms, only one has an undebat-

ed meaning, namely, the word *almah*. The chapter also develops the history of rabbinic usage and application and cites examples throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. The evidence presented demonstrates the only Hebrew word that could apply to the human mother of Yeshua is *almah*.

My students were most interested in these exegetical studies; they felt better prepared to discuss the correct interpretation, which may help non-believers understand that God was exact in His prophecies and only one meaning can be applied and fit the intended Scripture.

Ha-Mashiach is an in-depth study of prophecies from a Jewish perspective. Dr. Fruchtenbaum shares his scholarly expertise and research in developing appendices that further explore the various aspects of witnessing to non-believing Jews from a Jewish perspective. Several appendices stand out in giving excellent insight into pertinent Jewish and rabbinic history and expectations for recognizing the Jewish Messiah from a Jewish perspective. Two other



appendices, namely, "Appendix 8 – *Rabbinic Views of Messiah and Isaiah 53*" and "Appendix 10 – *Jewish Objections to Yeshua*," represent Dr. Fruchtenbaum's thorough and careful preparation in helping *Ha-Mashiach* students reach out to non-believing Jews and Gentiles.

The teaching of Ha-Mashiach means scheduling classes, writing questions to enhance learned material and class discussion, and most importantly, understanding the big picture of why we are doing this study. In order to make this a one-size-fits-all class (work schedules), the students chose to meet one Sunday afternoon a month. Since I was the class lecturer and writing the guestions, I assigned one chapter a month. As time went on, the women were becoming burgeoning scholars, and I knew it was time to increase the "homework." As we approached the end of the study, I added aligned appendices to deepen the understanding of rabbinic writings and Fruchtenbaum's keen insights regarding the coming of Messiah. These were most interesting classes!

To accommodate this study in my home, I made a classroom out of my living room. Our TV was used for transmission of the PowerPoints I had created, and I added a white board and laid out Bible resources books maps (Fruchtenbaum's The and Historical Geographical Maps of Israel, Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia's The Hebrew-English Interlinear ESV Old Testament, Zondervan's Handbook of Biblical Archaeology, Page & Volz's The Land and the Book, a wonderful relief map of modern-day Israel and another one during the times of Yeshua). These learning tools presented kinesthetic and tactile

learning experiences. I referred to several of Dr. Fruchtenbaum's other books and Messianic Bible Studies for further research. When applicable, I shared articles from the Ariel's guarterly magazine and newsworthy items relevant to our study. As an instructor, I realized that "guestions" were needed to guide the students to important points and make connections. I wrote a set of "Points for Discussion" for the appendices and Other Lines of Evidence chapters. These questions and points were integrated in the PowerPoint presentation. And I served tea at the end of class as students shared "connect the dots" break-throughs and added more questions for our current study.

After many months and several classes of Ha-Mashiach, interest increased, and the students eagerly added a second Bible class, one on the Life of Messiah (LOM) by Fruchtenbaum. At the very beginning of taking on Ha-Mashiach, I explained that studying a Fruchtenbaum book means "jumping in the deep end of the pool and learning how to swim fast!" That means studying, looking up references and new words, using biblical resources for further explanation if needed, and bringing questions for more understanding. Ah, the pool gets deeper, and the women met this challenge with keen interest. For several months, they were attending both classes, Ha-Mashiach and LOM! The Ha-Mashiach class completed the entire book the end of March 2019, and we are continuing to meet every Tuesday morning to study LOM. The women are ready now for more in-depth study (they are swimming laps now). This was a big step, as they spend at least three to four hours per class each week, and that does not just include studying LOM, but also working through Ariel's Harmony of the Gospels and answering questions at home before coming to class. The women rose to the challenge. At this writing, we are scheduled to finish the complete study of LOM by the end of May 2019. The women are looking forward to beginning the study of eschatology with Dr. Fruchtenbaum's The Footsteps of the Messiah (FOM), revised version to be available in 2020. In the meantime, next fall, we will study Fruchtenbaum's commentary on Ruth from Ariel's Bible Commentary series. The question I hear is not "When does this study end?", but, "What are we studying next?"

The jump from Bible study to a (Messianic) Bible class means the following:

- Continual growth and study to fill in more pieces of this heavenly puzzle.
- Serious investment in personal growth from a Jewish point of view in sharing the gospel with the "Jew first and also with the Greek".
- Engaging believers (and non-believers) in understanding the importance of *studying* the Bible *as written* by Jews: Old Testament (Hebrew), New Testament (Greek).
- Understanding that many churches have misinterpreted God's Word and have created new theories stating that the church is replacing Israel in God's plan. This seriously affects how we witness to Jews and Gentiles.



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