

Teaching *from* Zion

Dedicated to Dr. David H. Stern

*"...for out of Zion shall come forth Torah
and the word of the Lord from
Jerusalem" — Isaiah 2:3*

DISCIPLES OF YESHUA IN THE 20th CENTURY

*For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem*

Isaiah 2:3



Netivyah נתיביה
Teaching from Zion

ISSUE 54 | TAMUZ 5785 | JULY 2025

Published by Netivyah Bible Instruction
Ministry, Jerusalem, Israel

The articles printed in this issue of Teaching from Zion are the sole responsibility of their authors. Feel free to contact us at tfz@netivyah.org or by mail at **Mordechai Narkis St. 16, Jerusalem 9246208, ISRAEL**
Design & layout: itzodesign.com

About Netivyah

Netivyah in Hebrew means "the Way of the Lord." "The Way" was one of the names by which the early community of believers was known in the Brit Chadashah (New Testament). Paul says, "I worship the God of our fathers in accordance with the Way (which they call a sect). I continue to believe everything that accords with the Torah and everything written in the Prophets." (Acts 24:14 CJB). As followers of "the Way," we believe in the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We try to be faithful to God's law (the Torah) and to the rest of Scripture—the Prophets and the Writings. We believe that the Messiah promised in God's word is Yeshua (Jesus), the one who "saves His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

More Information: www.netivyah.org

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News from Israel and from Netivyah

As I reflect on the current war in Israel, termed the “War of Iron Swords,” I’m reminded of Charles Dickens’ words: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...” These words capture the contrast we are living—war and horror on one hand, and remarkable acts of faith, courage, and kindness on the other.

This war, extending from Gaza to the north and even reaching Yemen and Iran, has brought out both the depravity and the nobility of humanity. While conflict exposes man’s darkest instincts, it also reveals the divine spark in people rising to serve others selflessly.

Israel is facing immense moral, military, and spiritual challenges. And yet, we are seeing spiritual revival, solidarity, and hope like never before. Netivyah is actively supporting soldiers with top-quality equipment and lovingly prepared Shabbat meals delivered to front-line troops. Two of our own—Yudah and Nir—have been called up for reserve duty and they will be deeply missed.

Within the Roeh Israel congregation, our worship has grown stronger. Services are full, the Spirit is moving, and international guests are participating—Japanese, Chinese, and others reading Torah. Our ties with the local orthodox community are deepening in ways we never imagined.

Netivyah’s Hamotzi food distribution program, now over 30 years strong, is feeding about 1,000 people with top-quality goods—Jews (secular, orthodox, Messianic) and Arabs alike. This outreach is non-discriminatory and deeply needed, especially now.

Worldwide, antisemitism is surging. Pro-Israel voices, especially among believers in Yeshua, must rise to counter false narratives. As one unified family, we continue proclaiming God’s promises and truth boldly.

Though these are days of darkness, they are also filled with light. Let us pray for peace and continue standing together—for Israel, for the truth, and for God’s Kingdom.

Joseph Shulam

REMEMBERING DAVID STERN

THE WORD OF GOD FROM JERUSALEM TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

By Elhanan ben-Avraham



Elhanan and David with the old Netivyah Boy Scout troop.

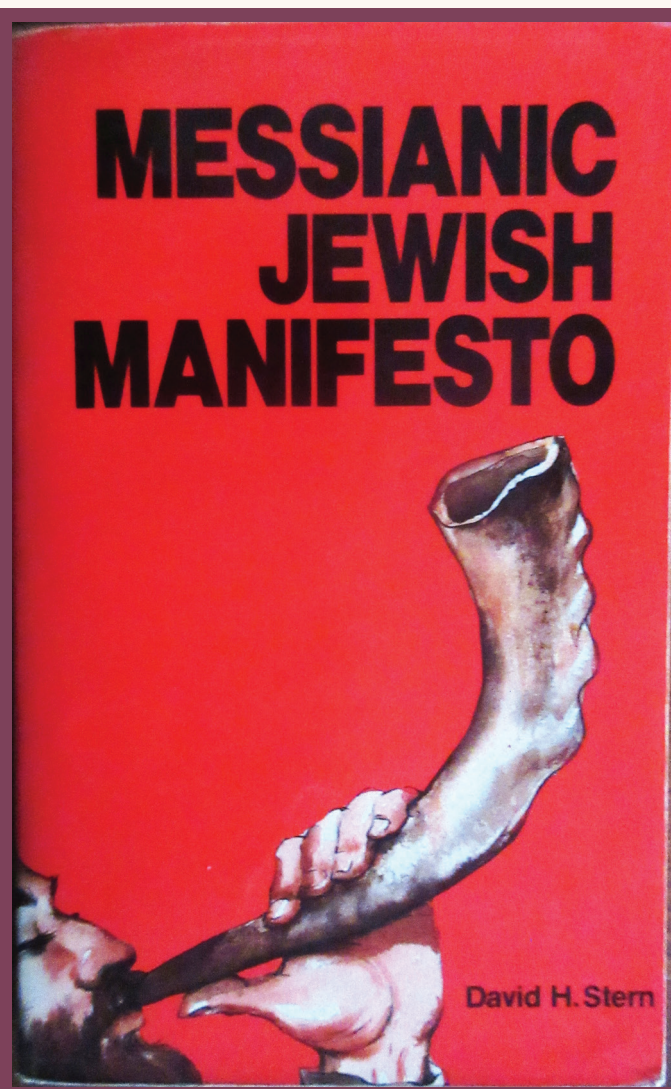
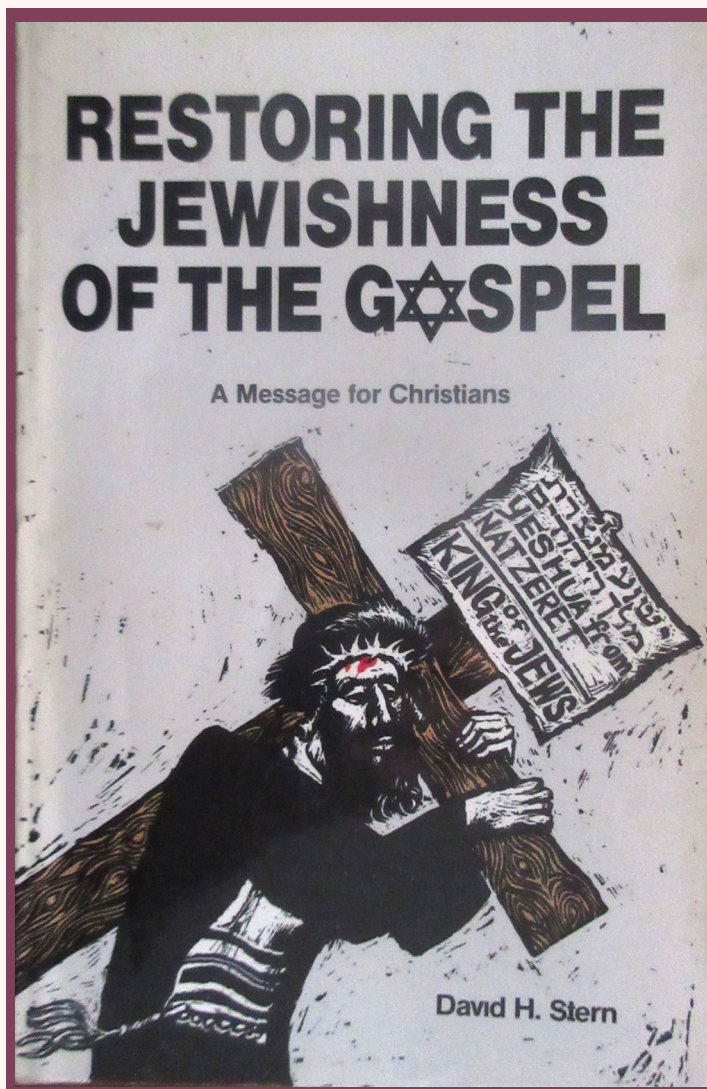
Jerusalem is perhaps the most interesting city on the planet, but is also a pressure cooker where the irreconcilable ends of the universe meet head-on. It is where it all began, and now we are back after a 2000-year hiatus to perform a spiritual restoration of historic and earth-shaking proportions. In doing so, each of us as Messianic Jews face challenges on every level. It is because of this that I needed to get away about as

far as possible from Jerusalem from time to time to recover.

I decided to fly around to the other side of the world to the wilds of British Columbia where I'd meet up with an old friend and we'd fly into the Canadian wilderness for a week of relaxation and trout fishing. On the flight into the wilds in the small single-engine float plane, I mentioned to the bush

pilot that I was a Messianic Jew from Jerusalem. He nodded but showed little interest. I assumed he'd never heard of such a person, out here in the middle of nowhere. We landed on a lake in the wilds of Canada.

After a boat ride up the river, we settled in the little log cabin, stocked with a week of food, but without electricity, only an oil lantern. The plane would return in a



week. I was content to be completely away from it all.

However, on the second day there came a surprising knock on the door of the cabin. Other than an occasional moose, I'd detected no presence whatsoever of human life out here in the forest. I opened the door and there stood a man, wet from the waist down, having crossed the river on foot. "I heard from the bush

pilot that there's a Messianic Jew from Jerusalem out here. I wanted to meet him," said the backcountry farmer. Over a cup of coffee, he told me how he'd gone to Vancouver and found a book on Messianic Judaism and The Jewish New Testament translation, written by one David Stern (and I having the honor of illustrating the original covers). He was quite surprised and very delighted when I told him that David is a friend and

part of our congregation in Jerusalem. We talked for hours about our work in Jerusalem, both of us amazed at this "coincidence".

When I returned to Israel, my old friend David was thrilled, as was I to find that his diligent historic work in Jerusalem had indeed impacted folks around the globe, even in the very distant Canadian wilderness of moose and men.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elhanan ben-Avraham, born in 1945, is a professional artist, poet, writer, father of two, and grandfather of four, and he has been living in Israel since 1979. He has served in the IDF, taught the Bible internationally, published five illustrated books of poetry, painted two large Biblical murals in public buildings in Jerusalem, and most recently produced THE JERUSALEM ILLUSTRATED BIBLE, among many other works. He and his wife live in a quiet village in the Mountains of Judah.

DAVID H. STERN

PIONEER OF MESSIANIC JUDAISM

By Martha Stern

David H. Stern was a visionary and a true pioneer of the modern Messianic Jewish movement—a man ahead of his time, guided by deep determination and purpose.

David came from a family line of pioneers. His father's family was among the first 20 Jewish families to settle in Los Angeles. His great-grandfather emigrated from Poznań (now in Poland) to America in the 1850s and crossed the continent by covered wagon to settle in Los Angeles. His great-grandmother, also from Poznań, traveled by sea around the southern tip of South America also arriving in California, where they married. On his mother's side, the family were German Jews who had immigrated to New York in the 1800s. The two families met aboard a ship returning to the "Old Country" (Europe) just before World War I to visit relatives. Several years later, David's father sent a telegram to the daughter of the other family, David's future mother, asking for her hand. They were Reform Jews and helped found Wilshire Boulevard

Temple, where David and his family worshiped. His grandfather's home stood at the iconic intersection of Hollywood and Vine.

David was a precocious child. Musically gifted, he began playing the recorder and later studied clarinet under the principal clarinetist of the LA Philharmonic while still in third grade. By age eight, he had taught himself to type. He also taught himself piano and guitar. Fascinated by genealogy, at age 16, long before the digital age, David cataloged 800 relatives into a family tree. Another interest was the weather, and he had an encyclopedic knowledge of Los Angeles weather statistics and could recite the temperature on any day from 1850 and on. He loved astronomy, could identify stars and constellations, and enjoyed sharing his knowledge with others, especially, later in life, his children and grandchildren.

David studied economics at UCLA and joined the Bruin Mountaineers, which took him on expeditions climbing snowy

peaks in the Canadian Rockies. He went on to earn his master's and Ph.D. in economics at Princeton University, specializing in game theory. Reflecting on his field, he once said, "I always thought economics was the hub in the center of the wheel—until one day I realized it was the hole in the center of the bagel." That realization sparked his search for deeper meaning, a journey that ultimately led him to faith in Yeshua in 1972.

Throughout his life, David pursued many interests. He opened several organic health food stores run as a hippie commune, called Back to Eden—a venture that failed because organic food had yet to catch on. He also rented a cabin on Topanga Beach and learned to surf at age 26. This hobby led to him co-authoring his first book, *Surfing Guide to Southern California*.

In his search for deeper meaning, he explored many different religions and faiths but never investigated

Christianity. While traveling through northern California for work, he stumbled across a Christian hippie commune which sparked his interest, having run a commune himself. These Christians shared their faith with him, and although he was not particularly interested, he was impressed by their love for one another. This sparked his curiosity, and he began reading the New Testament during his travels which led him to faith in Yeshua.

After becoming a believer, David, wanted to learn more about his newfound faith and enrolled at Fuller Theological Seminary, where he earned a Master of Divinity. He later studied at the University

of Judaism (the West Coast branch of the Jewish Theological Seminary). At Fuller, every assignment became an exploration of Messianic Judaism (then called Hebrew Christianity). In one paper, he even proposed the term “Yeshuic Judaism”—which, he said, “I ran it up the flagpole and no one saluted.” He later returned to Fuller to teach a pioneering course called Judaism and Christianity, incorporating his earlier academic work and invited rabbis to speak as guest lecturers.

In 1975, David attended the annual Messiah Conference (then called the Hebrew Christian Alliance conference)

at Messiah College in Pennsylvania. There are two things worth noting regarding the conference. First, he took with him copies of the course material he had taught with a preface where he wrote, “I do very much hope to be able to contribute, through writing, to the development of Messianic Judaism.”

This preface defined the key issues that the Messianic Jewish Movement needed:

1. Programmatics. The movement should develop a program or programs concerning its own future. What should it be? What should it do? What should it have?”

“You’re not just marrying David Stern—you’re marrying a library.” He owned over 6,000 books on Christianity, Judaism, theology, and more.





David decided to self-publish and thus Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc., was formed.

2. Theology. Developing Messianic Jewish theology in a way that gives equal due to the Jewish and the Christian input. There should be an overall approach that deals with the main issues.

3. Institutionalization. The movement should consider its identity in regard to other streams of Judaism and Christianity.

4. Jewish Involvement. Messianic Jews must constantly reach out to the Jewish community to involve themselves in Jewish community life.

5. Communicating Yeshua (evangelism)

The second significant thing was that shortly before attending the conference, the Lord woke David up early in the morning and told him to write: “At Messiah 75 I will show you your wife.

At first you will not recognize her. When you do, you will be dismayed, because no women on earth could meet the standards you have set up for a wife. But then you will realize the wisdom of My choice. It will then be up to you to woo and win her. I am the Lord.” Nearing 40, David had not expected to marry.

I had also come to faith in 1972 and joined Jews for Jesus in 1974, participating in their first New York summer campaign. That summer of 1975, on route to the next campaign, I attended the Messiah Conference. As the oldest single woman in our group, my friends were eager for me to meet someone and had me running the book table and they were all on the lookout for eligible single men.

David and I first met while sitting on benches outside the cafeteria. Dressed in his iconic Hawaiian shirt, he began

telling me about his academic papers. I wasn’t all that interested, and when it was time for lunch, I left him in the lunch line. Later, after telling Moishe Rosen, head of Jews for Jesus, that I hadn’t met anyone of interest, he said, “Yes there is. David Stern.” and spoke highly of him. That evening, I intentionally sat near David, greeted him, and asked to hear more about his testimony. We chatted, walked, and had lunch together the next day. During one walk, he said, “I’m considering you to be my wife. What do you think?” I replied, “I’ve thought of it too—but I need to get to know you better.” “Good,” he said. “We’ll do that.” After I returned to San Francisco, David invited me to visit him in LA, and our relationship deepened.

When I was ten years old, I read the book Exodus, by Leon Uris and from then on knew I wanted to live in Israel. One of

my conditions for marriage was that my husband share that desire. David's family were reform Jews and David grew up without a strong orientation to Israel. David had no interest to live in Israel. But, while studying at Fuller Theological Seminary, he participated in a summer Hebrew study program in Israel, following which he stayed on to explore more of Israel and meet some local Jewish believers. While there, he visited an orthodox yeshiva. When they learned he was a Messianic Jew, they invited him NOT to attend their yeshiva and suggested he might be interested to meet a former German Lutheran priest who had converted to Judaism and became a rabbi. During their meeting, David shared his ideas with this man, and he replied "What are you doing living in Los Angeles?! Now that the State of Israel exists, nothing new will come out of the Diaspora. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." That moment was a total 180-degree change for David and from then on—he knew he was meant to live in Israel. So that settled the Israel question.

Soon after, I left Jews for Jesus and the following year, on March 21 the first day of spring, we married, under the palm trees his grandmother had planted in her home in Hollywood. I sewed my own wedding dress and designed the invitations, which featured verses from Song of Songs 2:10–13. On several occasions, when our anniversary fell on Purim—I would wear my wedding dress as a costume, and David would wear a suit.

David's friends at Fuller warned me, "You're not just marrying David Stern—you're marrying a library." He owned over 6,000 books on Christianity, Judaism, theology, and more. When it came time to downsize, he donated his entire library to the Bram Center in

downtown Jerusalem, where it remains in use today.

After our marriage we joined Jews for Jesus and spent our first year of marriage traveling and speaking at churches. David ended that year by directing the Messianic stream at a major charismatic conference in Kansas City with 50,000 attendees. Though his track had only 250 registrants, over 1,500 people flocked to the sessions, drawn by their interest in Messianic Judaism. David was invited to sing the Aaronic Blessing at the main evening event.

Before making Aliyah, David wanted me to visit Israel, where I had never been. The trip was a wonderful experience and preparation for the upcoming move. We then returned to LA for a season before making Aliya in 1979.

David had always known he would write and while back in LA he set out to do so. Initially facing writer's block, he turned to the list he had made at Fuller outlining what Messianic Judaism needed—schools, institutions, and, critically, Biblical commentaries with a Messianic Jewish emphasis. He set out to

At first, the staff were skeptical—David, looking very casual, in his Hawaiian shirt, gym shorts, and flip flop sandals and bushy beard didn't exactly look like a Bible scholar.

accomplish this goal, write a Messianic Jewish Biblical commentary. He began with the Book of Acts but found himself constantly "arguing" with the existing translations, saying "the translation says this – but it should say this- ". He thought



it was dumb to keep having to correct the translations as part of the commentary. Instead of doing that, he thought ‘I’ll have to translated it myself’, and he set out to translate the New Testament. David used to say that the Bible is both the hardest book and the easiest book to translate. Easy, because there are so many other translations, commentaries and interlinear Bibles to work with but hard because it is the word of God and it should be perfect.

By then, our daughter was born, and we moved to Israel, where two years later, our “Sabra” son was born. We became actively involved with the Israeli local Messianic community and David continued writing.

While David was working on his translation, we would read it together, verse by verse, comparing it with an eight-version parallel Bible. One day we went into the Bible Society on Jaffa Road, in Jerusalem and David mentioned his project. At first, the staff were skeptical—David, looking very casual, in his Hawaiian shirt, gym shorts, and flip flop sandals and bushy beard didn’t exactly look like a Bible scholar. But when they learned he had already completed most of the New Testament, they took notice and coordinated to have their European New Testament translation expert Dr. Paul Ellingworth work with David for three weeks, reviewing the entire New Testament.

David sent his manuscript to several Messianic Jewish scholars but received little response. Undeterred, he submitted the manuscript to 12 Christian and several secular publishers—none accepted it. David decided to self-publish and thus Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc., was formed. He delayed the publishing of the New Testament because he wanted to publish it together with the commentary and in



He was more than a translator, scholar, or author. He was a pioneer, a man who stood at the crossroads of Jewish history and Christian faith and cleared a path for others to follow.

the meantime, he published two other books he had written “Restoring the Jewishness of the Gospel” explaining his theology for gentiles and “Messianic Jewish Manifesto” (now with a new title “Messianic Judaism, a Modern Movement with an Ancient Past”) a book outlining ideology, theology and

a program for the Messianic Jewish movement. A friend from Fuller, Phil Goebel, while visiting us in Israel, urged him to publish the Jewish New Testament without waiting for the commentary. “Jewish people are dying without hearing the Word,” he said. “The Word of God is quick and powerful and

doesn't need David Stern's commentary to prop it up."

With that encouragement, David went ahead and published the Jewish New Testament. Our friend, Barry Rubin took on the task of publishing and distributing David's books, including soon after the Jewish New Testament Commentary. David's final project was the Complete Jewish Bible, combining his New Testament with a paraphrase of the 1917 Jewish Publication Society's Tanakh. His books have since been translated into many languages including Hebrew and are available worldwide through Messianic Jewish Publishers & Resources. Additionally, we set up an author page on Facebook where David wrote about the weekly Torah portion. This page, David H. Stern Memorial page is still active today with people following it in at least 40 countries.

David used to recall a divine encounter shortly after coming to faith: "I was driving through the California foothills praying, when the Lord said, 'You will be an evangelist.' I pictured a tent preacher pounding a pulpit and said, 'Lord, that's not me!' The Lord replied, 'Don't worry how you will evangelize. I'll take care of that.'" His writing became his evangelism.

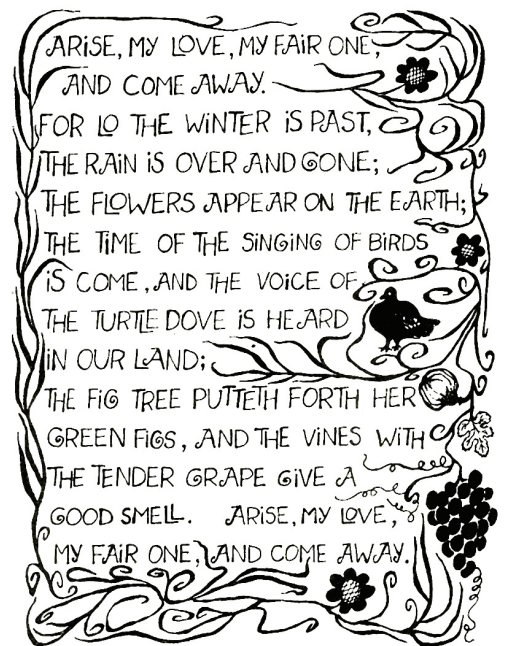
Once at a conference of Messianic Jewish leaders, David shared about his favorite composer, Joseph Haydn. He said "I looked up the article on Haydn by his biographer, and found the following quotation of Haydn's, with which I totally identify: "I know that God has bestowed a talent upon me, and

I thank him for it; I think I have done my duty and been of use in my generation by my works; let others do the same."

In a way this sums up David. He was more than a translator, scholar, or author. He was a pioneer, a man who stood at the crossroads of Jewish history and Christian faith and cleared a path for others to follow. His work has allowed countless Jewish believers to embrace Yeshua without sacrificing their heritage and has opened the eyes of Gentile Christians to the Jewish roots of their faith. Many have come to faith in Yeshua through his work.

We built a life together, in Israel, the land God gave our people, raising our two children and welcoming nine grandchildren. We keep a kosher home and celebrate the Jewish holidays and the national holidays together with all Am Israel (the people of Israel). We were active in the Messianic Jewish community both in Israel and globally, pioneering many aspects of this modern movement with an ancient past.

David was brilliant, curious, creative, funny, and deeply loving. His broad and diverse interests, such as science, classical music, astronomy and travel and his never-ending passion for learning continued throughout his life. Over the course of his life, he visited more than 60 countries and all 50 states of the United States. Together we explored Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, Greece, and beyond. In 1991 we took our children to Mexico to witness a 7 minute long, full solar eclipse. In his 50s he got very serious about his health and even entered



the Mr. Israel bodybuilding contest at age 60.

David passed away on October 8th, the Shabbat, between Yom Kippur and Sukkot—a time many consider to be sign of a Zadik, a holy person. He is buried overlooking Mevaseret Zion, the town whose name means "bringer of good news"—a translation of his middle name, Harold. I illustrated his gravestone with the same image I had drawn on our wedding invitation. On his gravestone is inscribed:

"For out of Tziyon will go forth Torah, the word of Adonai from Yerushalayim." (Isaiah 2:3)

This verse inspired his decision to live in Israel. It also defines his life's mission: bringing God's Word from Jerusalem to the world. I was blessed to be David's wife for 46 years—to share his life, his work, and his calling.

May his memory be a blessing.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Martha Stern has lived in Israel since 1979. David and Martha are pioneers in the messianic Jewish world, they have been members of Netivyah since its early years. Martha is an artist. She works in various mediums including painting - especially watercolor, mosaics, embroidery, and cloth tapestries. One of Martha's art works is the "Paroket" that she and some of the other women in the congregation made for the Torah Ark that we have in our worship hall. Martha has two adult children and nine wonderful grandchildren.

A LEGACY OF SPIRIT & SOUL

By Daniel Stern

Dr. David H. Stern—so much can be said about him. He was one of the founders of the modern Messianic Jewish movement, one of the leading theologians of the second half of the 20th century, and the author of the Messianic Jewish Manifesto, the Jewish New Testament, and more.

He studied at synagogue, and they wanted him to become a rabbi.

He studied and taught at Fuller Theological Seminary.

He lived for Yeshua for 50 years!

But there is more... He was brilliant, he skipped 2-3 grades in school.

He got a doctorate in Economics from Princeton at age 24.

He was the youngest professor in the economics department of UCLA.

He was a loving son, a brother, and an uncle to his many relatives.

He was a scoutmaster who did his best to help the underdogs succeed, to get to the top.

He founded a chain of Organic Health food stores called “Back to Eden” in Los Angeles.

He was a mountain climber, climbing mountains throughout North America and elsewhere.

He was a surfer, lived on the beach, and authored the Surfing Guide to Southern California.

But there is more... In 1976, He married Martha and in 1979 became a father (and again in 1981).

They immigrated to Israel in the summer of 1979 and moved to Jerusalem in 1983, where they lived until David passed away in October 2022. Martha still lives there.

He spent two decades writing books in his office (most of that time a home office), except for the help and devotion of his wife Martha, most of the work was done alone.

But there is still more... Later in life, in Israel after he moved there in 1979, David founded or co-founded many organizations that still impact the movement today, such as the Messianic

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Midrasha, which evolved into the Israel College of the Bible, the Hashivenu movement, and more.

David and Martha, his wife, didn't found any congregations but were quick to join some of the oldest congregations in Israel after they made Alya and became integral parts of the Messianic Body in Israel.

*As a child
and later as
an adult, my
experience
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that he never
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bad mood, and
rarely angry.*

So what do we have before us? Dr. David H. Stern, one of the prominent Sterns of Los Angeles, is a gifted student of religion, theologian, surfer, husband, economist, and more.

There is yet more... All of this is known or could be looked up, but what I wanted to write about is David Stern, my father, my dad, my Abba.

I want to tell you about that David, the one who woke up every morning at 6, to get me out of bed, make my Tuna sandwich (occasionally with pickles or celery) on two slices of semi-white bread and send me off to school, or once I hit Junior High, would occasionally drive me to school.

The one that would blast Mozart, Haydn, and Bach all over the house, from his speakers in the living room, his bedroom, and his office, to the point that I now dislike all of that wonderful classical music!

My dad took me and my friends to the soccer field and taught us baseball, he would run behind me as I learned to ride a bike.

My dad read me the Iliad (and Odyssey) in his room (with Haydn blaring) when I was six years old (after waking me up), and when I was ten, let me plan a trip to Greece for the whole family, following in the trail of the heroes of the Iliad (Sparta, Mycinee, Corinth and more).

In fact my Abba, took us all over to fun

and interesting places and things, for example in 1991 we went to Mexico to see a total eclipse of the sun, middle of the day, in the desert!

When I was fourteen he encouraged me to go with him to the gym to work out and get in shape (didn't work), and later also took one of my friends and classmates to the gym and helped him get in shape (worked great, he became a Wingate fitness trainer). After my dad passed in 2022, I heard from a handful of others that he took them to the gym, paid for their membership and helped them get in shape.

Some might be embarrassed to share this, but I was a bedwetter... and my dad, he slept on a mattress on the floor of my room for three months in order to wake

me up in the middle of the night to go to the toilet, because I was such a deep sleeper that the BEEP BEEP BEEPs of the alarms didn't wake me up.

Growing up I had a wonderful yellow labrador named Vanilla, I loved her and she loved me (I hope), yes I walked her, yes I brushed her (not enough), but who do you think cleaned up after her? Of course my Abba.

As a child and later as an adult, my experience of him was that he never complained, was never in a bad mood, and rarely angry.

There is so much more I could write about my Abba, about his wightlifting competitions in his 60s, about him teaching me to surf, or touch typing ON A TYPEWRITER!

So maybe you know him as the Author of the Complete Jewish Bible, and a great teacher of the word but I hope that with this article you get a taste of the man behind the book, my Abba, David H. Stern.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Daniel was born in Israel in 1981 to parents who were founders in the Messianic movement. His military service was with the Israel Police. After his military service, he studied political science and sociology at the Hebrew University. He has four amazing children. Daniel grew up in Netivyah, but started working here in 2011.

BELIEVING JEWS THROUGHOUT HISTORY

By Joseph Shulam

This article is a look behind the curtain of the Jews who have chosen to accept and believe that Yeshua is the Messiah.

Yeshua was important enough for the leadership of Israel to hand him to the Romans, falsely accuse him of sedition against Rome, and crucify him in the name of the entire Roman Empire!

Yeshua has always had disciples, especially Jewish disciples, who were the first among His followers. The number of Jewish disciples of Yeshua in Israel has grown since 1967 by hundreds of percent. In Israel in 1967, there were less than 50 Jews in the three congregations that existed in Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Haifa. On a good Shabbat morning on the top of Aaron Street, we would have 18 living souls in Jerusalem. These were breathing bodies. If you count the understanding souls – you would have, on a good day, 10 well-meaning souls. All that came into the congregation on Shabbat morning were people who were believers, damaged by Nazi officers and horrible torture and abuse in their death camps. Right after the Six-Day War, there was a ballooning number of Jews who started honoring and changing their attitude toward Yeshua and also towards the disciples of Yeshua in Israel. Today, there are many congregations across the land of Israel who are disciples and followers of Yeshua.

During the war in Gaza and in the north on the Lebanese border, the statistic is that a very high percentage of the number of soldiers in the best units of the Israeli Defense Force are disciples of Yeshua who were and are until now battling our enemies, the terrorist organizations in Gaza and Lebanon.

Throughout the ages, Jewish disciples of Yeshua existed, and many disguised their faith through cryptic statements and lessons. The image spread in modern Orthodox Judaism about Yeshua's disciples is that only uneducated, ignorant Jews believe that Yeshua is the Jewish Messiah. However, from the beginning of Yeshua's ministry, prominent Jewish Rabbis, like Rabbi Joshua Ben Brachia, had polemic stories to discredit Yeshua and his followers.

This article is a look behind the curtain of the Jews who have chosen to accept and believe that Yeshua is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God! I begin with a short list of Rabbis who followed Yeshua and admired Yeshua as a great Rabbi and teacher. Some also believed that Yeshua was the Messiah of Israel and the world.

This article can't be encyclopedic in scope because of many examples of great Rabbis in the first, second,


and third centuries CE who accepted, believed, followed, and were inspired by Yeshua, his personality, and his teaching. Together with their disciples, these Rabbis joined Yeshua's disciples.

Ancient and Early History

- Nicodemus (Nakdimon ben Gurion). As stated in John 3:2, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him." Nicodemus, a Pharisee and member of the Sanhedrin, secretly sought Yeshua for guidance and recognized his divine authority.

- Rabbi Gamaliel the Elder. In Acts 5:38–39, Gamaliel says, "If this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!" As a leading Pharisee, Gamaliel showed respect and caution toward the growing Yeshua movement, leaving room for divine involvement.

- Joseph of Arimathea. Mark describes Joseph in Mark 15:43, "Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God," went boldly to



Throughout the ages, Jewish disciples of Yeshua existed, and many disguised their faith through cryptic statements and lessons.

Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Joseph demonstrated his reverence for Yeshua by providing a tomb for his burial.

- Rabbi Joshua ben Perachiah. A narrative involving Rabbi Joshua ben Perachiah and Yeshua (Jesus) appears in the Babylonian Talmud, specifically in Sanhedrin 107b and Sotah 47a. According to these accounts, during the reign of King Alexander Jannaeus (c. 103–76 BCE), Rabbi Joshua ben Perachiah, a leading Pharisee, fled to Alexandria, Egypt, to escape persecution. His student, Yeshua, accompanied him. Upon their return, an incident occurred at an inn where Rabbi Joshua commented on the establishment's quality. Yeshua misinterpreted his teacher's remark, leading to a rebuke and eventual estrangement. Subsequently, Yeshua is depicted as engaging in idolatry and

leading others astray.

The timeline presented in the Talmudic account places Yeshua during the era of Alexander Jannaeus, which is approximately a century before the commonly accepted period for Jesus of Nazareth. This significant chronological gap suggests that the Yeshua mentioned in these passages may not correspond to the New Testament figure. Scholars have debated whether these accounts refer to a different individual or represent a polemical retelling.

The Talmudic narratives are often considered part of a broader Jewish response to emerging Christian claims. By portraying Yeshua as a disciple who strayed and engaged in improper conduct, these stories serve to delegitimize Christian assertions about Jesus' authority and character. The development of such accounts likely aimed to reinforce Jewish perspectives and counteract the growing influence of Christianity.

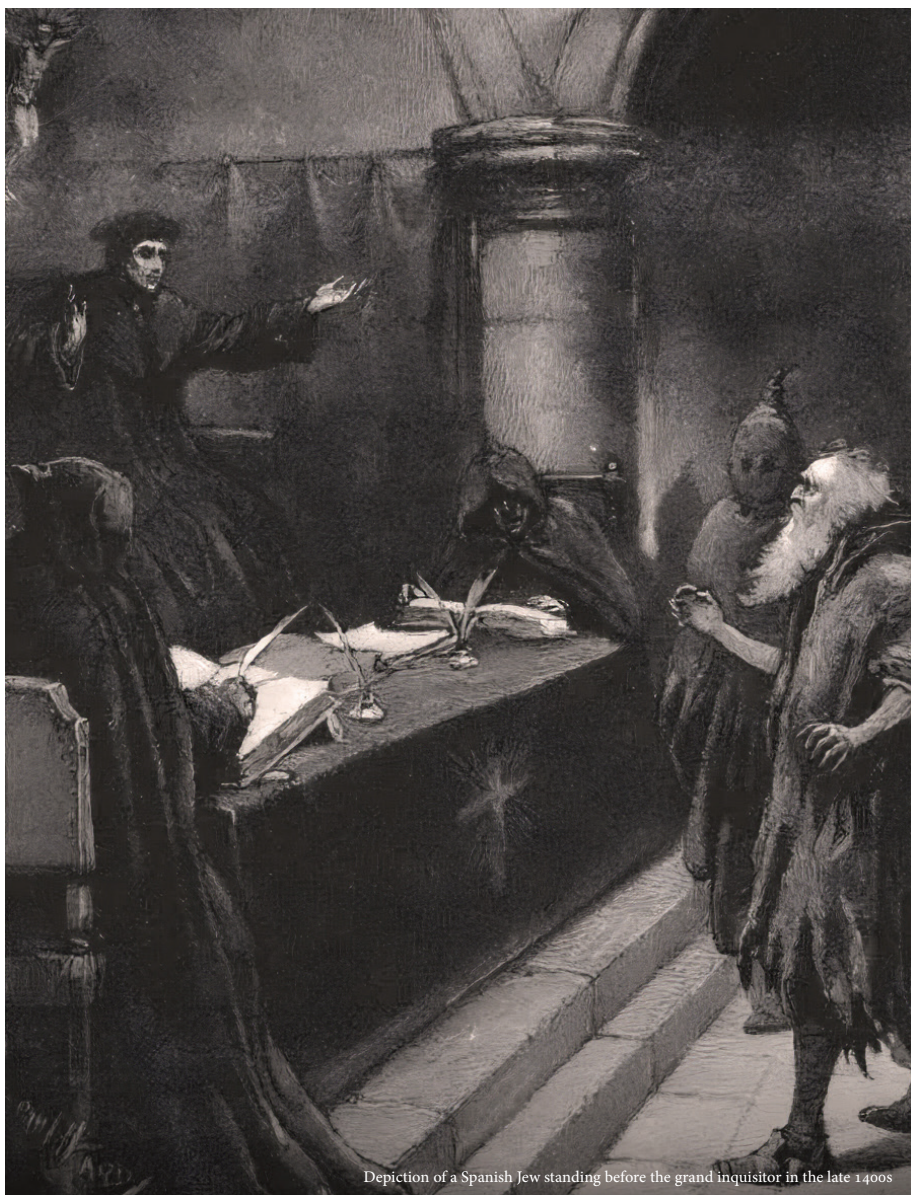
Scholars generally consider the Talmudic stories about Rabbi Joshua ben Perachiah and Yeshua to be of limited historical value concerning the

life of Jesus of Nazareth. The anachronistic timeline and the context of religious polemics suggest that these accounts were crafted more for rhetorical purposes than as factual biographies. They reflect the complex dynamics and tensions between early Judaism and nascent Christianity.

The Talmudic account of Rabbi Joshua ben Perachiah and Yeshua exemplifies how the Jewish religious communities have historically used polemics to assert doctrinal boundaries and authority. While intriguing, these narratives are best understood within their context of inter-religious discourse rather than as reliable historical records of Jesus' life.

From the 2nd to the 5th Century CE, Talmudic Rabbis became disciples of Yeshua, many living in the land of Israel. The period in which they lived is unlike how it is for us today, as our generation wakes up to deliver ourselves from the dead weight of the horrible reputation of the Christian churches, being born out of antisemitism and who continue to be Jew haters. It is up to us today in our generation to stand up and be what God wants us to be: Disciples of Rabbi Yeshua. We must proclaim what Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Paul said clearly, "All of Israel will be saved!"

- Abner of Burgos, also known as Alfonso of Valladolid (c. 1270–1347), lived in Castile, Spain. He was born into a Jewish family but later converted to Christianity, becoming a



Depiction of a Spanish Jew standing before the grand inquisitor in the late 1400s

During the 16th century CE, Jews were forced to convert to Christianity or lose all their rights, property, and livelihood. Many were tortured if anyone in their family kept the Jewish holidays and commandments. They were also forced to change their names to ‘Christian’ names.

critic of Judaism and writing polemical works against it. His writings and influence were significant in medieval Spain, particularly in theological and philosophical debates between Jews and Christians. He is quoted as saying: “The Scriptures point clearly to Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah promised to Israel.”

Now, let’s jump to the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisition. During the 16th century CE, Jews were forced to convert to Christianity or lose all their rights, property, and livelihood. Many were

tortured if anyone in their family kept the Jewish holidays and commandments. They were also forced to change their names to ‘Christian’ names, which were most often given to them by the priests who converted them by sprinkling a few drops of water on their heads and changing their names.

- Alfonso de Zamora. One of these brilliant Jews was a professor at a university in Spain. His Christian name was “Alfonso de Zamora.” He was a great scholar with vast knowledge of Jewish religious literature. This same

Alfonso wrote a very important and impressive book of 306 pages of folio size, handwritten in Hebrew. I have this book on film and also the right to publish it. Here is the transcription to modern Hebrew. The Hebrew transcription

of contemporary text and the English translation by AI are below.

The Hebrew text of the first page of the book, The Book of the Wisdom of God

ספר חכמת אלהים. הספר הזה יש בו [1א] • תועלות רבות כדי לתפוש משוכת העברים, שיהם עורים לפי שיש בו מאמרים רבים מן הכתוב עם פרושיהם, אשר מהם נשיב להם, והמשפיל יבין בהם פונתו, לעשות רצון האל ונתו. ועל כן נכתב ונעמק ברשות ובמאמר השך הגדול דון פראניאן די טולידו והוא פהו גדול לאל עליון במדינת

אלהיכם וחסאתיכם הסתירו פנים מכם משמוע, כי פניכם נגאלו בדם ואצבעותיכם בעון שפתותיכם דברו שקר. עוד תעברנה הצאן על ידי מונה אמר יהנה, [א2] תרגם יונתן עוד יתנהו עממיה לפלחני משיחא אמר יי. הנה ימים באים נאם יי והקומותי את הדבר הטוב אשר דברתי אל בית ישראל ועל בית יהודה. בימים ההם ובעת ההיא אצמיח לדוד צמח צדקה ומלך מלך והשפיל ועשה משפט וצדקה בארץ, בימים ההם תושע יהודה וירושלם תשכון לבטח וזה אשר יקרא לה יהנה צדקנו. כי פה אמר יי לא יפרת לדוד איש יושב על פסא בית ישראל וגומר תרגם יונתן אצמיח לדוד אקנים לדוד משיחא דצדקה. ביום ההוא יהנה צמח יונה לצבי ולקבוד

His purpose was to comprehend the hidden meanings of the twenty-four books—radiant like sapphires—clear to the wise and upright to those seeking understanding.

May God, in His mercy, protect him and grant him life to fulfill His will all the days of his life, and may He prolong his days as in the days of his youth.

Since we did not find the beginning of this book in the manuscript from

Although it was a challenging period of the Inquisition in the Iberian Peninsula, Alfonso of Zamora didn't allow the suffering and cruelty of the Catholic torture to sway him from writing.

קורדובה. והוא חכם שלם בחכמת אלהים וישר בכל עניניו, לא גבה לבו ולא רמו עיניו. והנה פונתו להבין סתרי הספרים, ארבעה ועשרים, מאירים פספירים, פלם נבוחים למבין וישרים למוציא דעת. האל ברחמי ישרהו ויחיהו לעשות רצונו כל ימי חייו, ויאריו ימיו, כימי עליומיו. ובעבור שלא מצאנו התחלת הספר הזה בספר שהעתקנו ממנו, לכן התחלנו מן המאמר הנקבד הזה אשר ממנו נוציא דבר אמת ועונה צדק כדי לחזק ולאמין ולבאר היטב גאלת ישוע משיחנו. ונאמר כל אשר חפץ יהנה עשה בשמים ובארץ בימים וכל תהומות חכם לב ואמין פה. גדול אדונינו ורב פח לתבונתו אין מספר. נביא מקרבה מאחיד כמוני יקום לה יי אלהיך אליו תשמעון.

במדרש קהלת. מה שהיה הוא שיהיה, רבי ברכיה בשם רבי יצחק אמר בגואל ראשון פה גואל אחרון, מה גואל הראשון שנגאמר ויחם משה את אשתו ואת בניו וירכיבם על החמור, פה גואל אחרון שנגאמר עני ורכב על חמור. מה גואל הראשון הוריד את הפן שנגאמר הנני ממסיר לכם מן השמים, אף גואל אחרון שנגאמר יהי פסת בר בארץ. מה גואל ראשון העלה את הבאר, פה אחרון יעלה המים שנגאמר ומעין מבית יהנה יצא והשקה. ונצי השבוע לשפית נבח ומנחה.

הן לא קצרה יד יהנה מהושיע ולא כבדה אָנו משמוע, כי אם עונותיכם היו מבדילים ביניכם לבין

ופרי הארץ לגאון ולתפארת לפליטת ישראל, תרגם יונתן בעידןא ההיא יהא משיחא די לחדןא וליקר, וגומר.

The English translation of the first page of The Book of the Wisdom of God

“This book is very beneficial for addressing the waywardens of the Hebrews, who were blind. It includes many sayings from the Scriptures together with their explanations, through which we may offer them a response. The discerning person will understand their intent—to do God’s will and obey His command.

Therefore, it was written and copied with permission and by order of the great nobleman, Dom Perignon de Toledo, High Priest of the Highest God in the province of Cordoba.

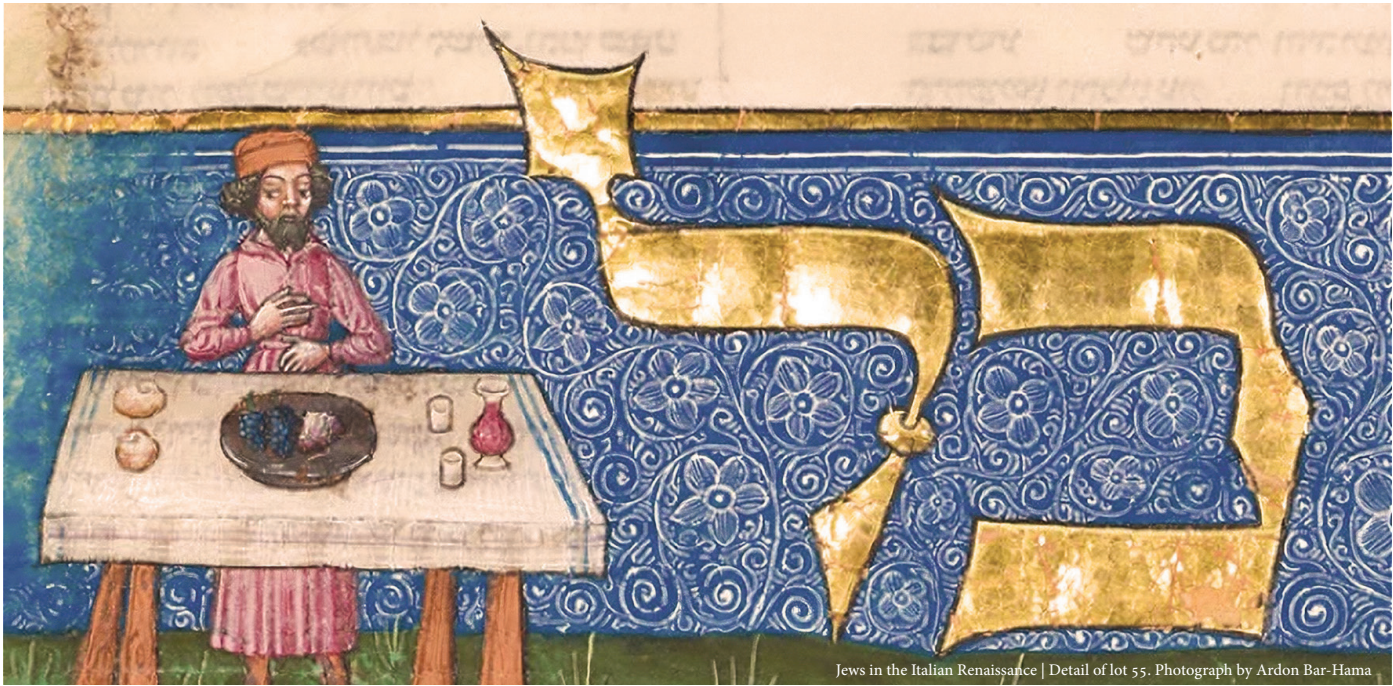
He is a man fully wise in the knowledge of God, upright in all his ways—his heart is not haughty, and his eyes are not lifted up in pride.

which we copied it, we began instead with this noble discourse, from which we will bring forth truth and humble righteousness—to strengthen, confirm, and clearly explain the redemption through Yeshua, our Messiah.

And we declare: “Whatever the Lord pleases, He does—in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all the depths. He is wise of heart and mighty in strength. Great is our Lord and abundant in power—His understanding is beyond measure.”

“A prophet from among you, from your brethren, like me, shall the Lord your God raise up for you—to him you shall listen.”

I am sure that Rabbi Alfonso of Zamora was not the only Rabbi who sincerely believed in Yeshua as the Messiah. Long before the age of computers, Rabbi Alfonso wrote this book and compiled quotations from some of the most obscure and well-neglected Rabbinical literature, with his acumen



Jews in the Italian Renaissance | Detail of lot 55. Photograph by Ardon Bar-Hama

Jews became disciples of Yeshua and kept their Jewish identity during the Jewish Renaissance Period in Europe.

and knowledge of Rabbinical texts and the Jewish Religious library. Many of these manuscripts combined old and new traditions that provided a carpet for New Testament texts and Messianic ideas. The manuscripts today are essentially lost and preserved a deep heritage of Messianic ideas and concepts that are 100% Jewish, yet still have old and new traditions that provide a carpet for all the New Testament texts and messianic ideas. These serve as a pillow to put our heads upon and peacefully and comfortably present an authentic Jewish text that cements Yeshua as the Messiah, Son of David, Son of Abraham.

Although it was a challenging period of the Inquisition in the Iberian Peninsula, Alfonso of Zamora didn't allow the suffering and cruelty of the Catholic torture, burning people alive, including children next to their mothers and fathers, to sway him from writing.

Alfonso de Zamora looked from behind the veil of bloody Christianity and cruelty and saw that the Jewish Yeshua of Nazareth was worshipped by pagans who didn't know the difference between chocolate pudding and what the goats left behind. Alfonso of Zamora worked hard to bring, as he said on the first page, the proof that Yeshua is the Messiah and the Savior of humanity, the fulfillment of texts like Isaiah 6, Jeremiah 23, and Isaiah 53, and God's promises to Israel.

I want to be there on that great day in Revelation when all will be gathered in front of the white throne of the Jew with the scars on both his hands and feet. Scars inflicted by the sons of the sons of perdition who nailed Yeshua, Son of David, Son of Abraham, to the wooden Roman cross. The innocent blood shed by the Galilean Jew named Yeshua (Salvation) by the idolatrous sons of evil will be like the blood of Abel, who

is screaming from under the sods of the holy land of Israel.

- Rabbi Solomon Halevi (Paul of Burgos, 1351–1435). He converted after studying the Messianic prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures. He is credited with the following statement: "In Yeshua of Nazareth, I found the true fulfillment of the Torah and Prophets." More Rabbis were burned alive by the soldiers/priests of the Catholic Inquisition from Europe to Goa, India, where today, when you visit Goa, you can view a Catholic fortress as big as the Vatican in Rome.

Jews became disciples of Yeshua and kept their Jewish identity during the Jewish Renaissance Period in Europe.

Moving into modern times, here is a list of Jewish leaders from the 19th and 20th centuries CE. Europe has had a sad track record for Messianic Jewish leadership.

Even though the Israeli Chief Rabbinate removed Rabbi Daniel Zion from official rabbinic duties due to his beliefs, he continued teaching and influencing the Messianic Jewish Movement until his passing in 1979.

In the 19th Century, there were a few bright stars in what would be called by proxy “Messianic Jewish” ministries in Europe. In the 20th Century, the center of Jewish missions was in England. Some Jewish leaders came to Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Haifa to evangelize. Although they had purchased land in the big cities in Israel, all they accomplished was serving their Christian denominations. There was never one drop of interest in Judaism, in Jewish lifestyle, or in keeping the Biblical commandments of God.

- Rabbi Yechiel (Jehiel) Lichtenstein was a 19th-century Messianic Jewish scholar and author. His birth and death dates are not widely documented, but he was active in the mid-to-late 19th Century CE. He lived in Eastern Europe, likely Hungary or Romania, where he engaged in biblical scholarship and writings from a Messianic Jewish perspective. Rabbi Yechiel devoted his life to demonstrating how Yeshua fulfilled Jewish messianic expectations. He is quoted as saying: “I searched the Torah, and I found all the signs of the Messiah fulfilled in Yeshua.” Rabbi Yechiel devoted his life to demonstrating how Yeshua fulfilled Jewish messianic expectations.

- Rabbi Isaac Lichtenstein (1824–1908) was the Chief Rabbi of Tápíószele, Hungary. He served in this position for about 40 years and became known for believing in Yeshua (Jesus) as the Messiah while still considering himself Jewish. Despite his unconventional views, he remained within the Jewish community and sought to present

his belief in Yeshua from a Jewish perspective. Isaac Lichtenstein continued wearing his rabbinic robes while sharing his faith in Yeshua. His writings and teachings significantly impacted Eastern Europe’s early Messianic Jewish Movement. He is quoted as saying: “The New Testament seemed to me to be a continuation of the Old, a completion, an explanation. Yeshua is the glory of my people, Israel.”

- Rabbi Daniel Zion (1883–1979), Chief Rabbi of Bulgaria, Rabbi Daniel Zion (1883–1979) was a Bulgarian-born rabbi who later became a leading figure in the Messianic Jewish Movement. He served as the Chief Rabbi of Sofia, Bulgaria, during World War II and played a crucial role in resisting Nazi persecution of Bulgarian Jews. Despite believing in Yeshua (Jesus) as the Messiah, Rabbi Zion remained devoted to Jewish tradition and Halacha. After immigrating to Israel in 1949, he continued his work within the Jewish community, advocating for faith in Yeshua while maintaining Jewish identity. He was also connected to the Nazarenes in Israel, a group of Jewish Yeshua believers.

Even though the Israeli Chief Rabbinate removed him from official rabbinic duties due to his beliefs, he continued teaching and influencing the Messianic Jewish Movement until his passing in 1979. I was proud to serve Rabbi Daniel Zion for several years when he was very old and weak. The Bulgarian Jewish Community gave Rabbi Daniel Zion a full military funeral with all the

honors, walking and carrying his funeral casket by hand from the center of Jaffa to the cemetery in Holon, at least several kilometers away. Quote: “The Lord showed me in a vision that Yeshua is the Messiah of Israel.”

- Dr. Alfred Edersheim (1825–1889) was a Jewish scholar, historian, and theologian of Austrian origin who later became a believer in Yeshua (Jesus) as the Messiah. He was born in Vienna, Austria, to a Jewish family; he studied in Hungary before converting to Christianity. Later, he moved to Scotland, where he studied theology and became a minister. He is best known for his work *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, which provides deep historical and cultural insights into the Jewish context of the New Testament. His writings bridge Jewish history, rabbinic traditions, and Christianity, making them highly influential in Christian and Messianic Jewish studies. Edersheim’s scholarship remains highly regarded for its depth in the Jewish historical context, particularly among those studying the Jewish roots of the New Testament.

- Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (1858–1922) was a Jewish linguist, lexicographer, and Zionist known as the reviver of the Hebrew language as a modern, spoken tongue. Born in Luzhki, Russian Empire (now Belarus), to a Jewish family, he studied in Paris, where Zionist ideas influenced him. He immigrated to Ottoman Palestine in 1881 and dedicated his life to reviving Hebrew as a living language. With his family, he restored the Hebrew language. He

*Flusser is known to have said:
“Jesus is a figure who cannot be
understood apart from Judaism.
He was a faithful Jew, and his
teachings reflect the essence of
the Torah.”*

made it the language of the Jews in the 20th Century, restoring the crown of the language of the prophets of Israel to the daily life of the Jewish people in Israel and significant parts of the diaspora. As the father of Modern Hebrew, Ben-Yehuda admired Yeshua’s ethical teachings. Ada, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda’s daughter, was a member of our congregation for several of her last years. From Eliezer Ben-Yehuda: “Yeshua’s teachings are a light to the Jewish people. He must be understood in the language of our people.”

(I must share with you the following story: In 1971, Jerusalem hosted the 2 Holy Spirit conference. Ada Ben-Yehuda Reem was already a very old sister in the Lord. She asked me if I would take her to this conference at the national hall in Jerusalem. I couldn’t say NO to Ada. So, I took her, and we got a special seat for Ada and me. We sat on the middle aisle on the first floor, right below the speaker stand. Next to Ada, on her right, sat a big, loud woman with long blond hair in a tower on top of her head.

Ada was talking to me in Hebrew, and the big Texas-sized blonde turned to Ada, standing next to her with her blond hair in a tower on the blonde’s hair. Texas turned to Ada and said with her unique accent: “Dear Sister, Are you a Christian?”

Ada looked at Texas and said, “No,

I am not a Christian!” Texas asked, “Why have you come here?” Ada very calmly answered, “I am here because I love Jesus!” Texas retorted: “Why do you love Jesus if you are not a Christian?” Ada answered loudly and clearly: “Because I know him!” This answer left Texas confused. “You know Jesus?” Ada answered short and precise! “Yes, I know Jesus!” “How do you know Jesus?” Ada understood that Texas would not understand this, so she turned to her and said: “When we were little children, our father, Eliezer, used to take us on long walks to historical and archeological places in the land of Israel, walking and camping. Our father, Ada said, was walking with us children with a Bible and with a New Testament in his hand; we would walk and read and talk about Jesus all around the country from Galilee through Beer Sheba.”

Texas looked at Ada and said, “Oh, I see! So, you are a Christian!”

Ada understood that she had to simplify her words so the conversation would end before Katherin Kolman got on the stage and spoke.

Texas turned to Ada again, asking, “But do you believe that Jesus is God?”

Ada was not shocked and answered the question very clearly and smartly. Ada told Texas, “Dear sister, the Messiah was divine long before he was born in

Bethlehem.” You see, there are texts in the Hebrew Bible like this one: “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6 NKJV)

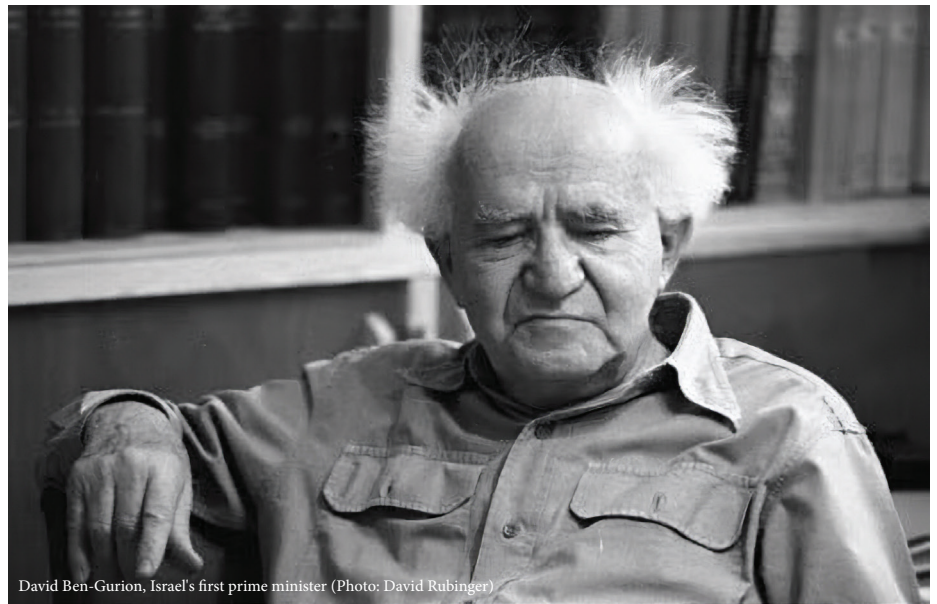
I bring this story about Ada Reem and the big Texas Blonde to share with you that, as Jews, we ought to have a natural affinity to Yeshua. Yeshua is the blood of our blood and flesh or our flesh. He is the most important Jew in human history. Yeshua is the one Jew known to the Indians to the Amazon River Valley through Yeshua; they also believe in King David and the land of Israel being given to us Jews as an eternal inheritance. It is because they have the whole Bible because of Yeshua, who recognized that the land of Canaan became the Land of Israel in the Hebrew Bible.)

Jewish believers of the 20th Century CE

- Martin Buber (1878–1965) was a Jewish philosopher, theologian, and scholar known for his works on existentialism, dialogue, and Hasidic spirituality. He was born into a Jewish family in Vienna, Austria-Hungary. He was raised in Lviv (now in Ukraine) by his grandfather, a Midrash and Hebrew literature scholar. He studied philosophy and Jewish mysticism in Vienna, Leipzig, and Berlin. He moved to Mandatory Palestine in 1938, fleeing Nazi persecution, and became a professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Buber’s work remains highly influential in philosophy, religious studies, and Jewish thought, particularly in dialogue, faith, and ethics discussions. He says, “Yeshua’s teachings have the power to awaken the true essence of Jewish spirituality.” Buber emphasized Yeshua’s significance as a Jewish teacher and prophet.

- David Flusser (1917–2000) was a Jewish historian and scholar of Second Temple Judaism, early Christianity, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. Born in Vienna, Austria, and raised in Czechoslovakia, Flusser immigrated to Mandatory Palestine in 1939. He studied at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and later became a professor of Early Christianity and Second Temple Judaism. Flusser was an expert on Jesus’ Jewish background. He argued that Yeshua (Jesus) should be understood within the context of Second Temple Judaism, emphasizing his deep roots in Jewish thought. He contributed to the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls, showing their significance in understanding the Jewish world of Yeshua. He wrote extensively on the New Testament from a Jewish perspective, including his well-known book *Jesus*, which explored Jesus’ Jewish identity and teachings. He engaged with Jewish and Christian audiences, promoting a better understanding of early Christianity’s Jewish roots. Flusser’s work remains foundational for those studying the historical Jesus, early Judaism, and the connections between Judaism and Christianity. Flusser is known to have said: “Jesus is a figure who cannot be understood apart from Judaism. He was a faithful Jew, and his teachings reflect the essence of the Torah.”

- Sholem Asch (1880–1957) was a Polish-born Jewish novelist, playwright, and essayist who wrote primarily in Yiddish. He was born in Kutno, Poland (then part of the Russian Empire), into a Hasidic Jewish family. In youth, he moved to Warsaw and began writing in Yiddish and Hebrew. He immigrated to the United States in 1914 and lived in France, England, and Israel. A prominent Yiddish literary figure, he was known for his deep explorations of Jewish life, faith, and identity. He wrote controversial “Christological



David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister (Photo: David Rubinger)

Ben Gurion acknowledged Jesus as a Jew and saw him as part of Jewish history. He viewed Yeshua as someone deeply rooted in Jewish tradition and ethics

novels”: *The Nazarene* (1939), a novel about Yeshua (Jesus) from a Jewish perspective; *The Apostle* (1943), which focused on Paul; and *Mary* (1949), which explored the life of Jesus’ mother. These books sparked a backlash from the Jewish community, as many felt he was promoting Christianity. He is quoted as saying: “The Nazarene has been the most beloved Jew in human history. His life was one of sacrifice and love.”

- David Ben-Gurion (1886–1973) was the primary Founder of the State of Israel and served as its first Prime Minister and Minister of Defense. Born David Grün in Płońsk, Poland (then part of the Russian Empire), he was active in Zionist movements from a young age. He immigrated to Ottoman Palestine in 1906, where he worked in agriculture and became involved

in the Jewish labor movement. Ben-Gurion acknowledged Jesus as a Jew and saw him as part of Jewish history. He viewed Yeshua as someone deeply rooted in Jewish tradition and ethics. He once remarked that the New Testament is a Jewish text written by Jews, reflecting Jewish thought and values. He saw early Christianity as a development within Judaism, not initially a separate faith. He recognized the Jewish moral and ethical influence on Christianity. In a famous 1969 interview, Ben-Gurion said: “Jesus was Jewish. He and his disciples were Jews. The New Testament is a Jewish book.”

- Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger (1926–2007) was a French Jewish-born Catholic cardinal who played a significant role in Jewish-Christian relations and the Catholic Church in



Around 1923, Moshe was walking from the Jewish quarter to Jaffa Gate in the old city; he encountered two English boys having a bitter fight. He stopped the fight and took these boys inside the Christ Church compound.

France. Born Aaron Lustiger in Paris, France, to Polish Jewish immigrants during World War II, his parents sent him to a Catholic family for safety, where he was introduced to Christianity. At age 14, he converted to Catholicism, taking the name Jean-Marie. His mother, Gisele Lustiger, was deported to Auschwitz, where she perished in 1943. As a close advisor to the Pope, he played a significant role in Catholic-Jewish reconciliation, emphasizing the Jewish roots of Christianity. He Never Renounced His Jewish Identity. He famously said: "I was born Jewish, and so I remain, even if that's unacceptable for many. For me, the vocation of Israel is to bring light to the nations. That is my hope, and I believe that Christianity is the means for achieving it." He viewed his belief in Yeshua (Jesus) as the Messiah as a continuation of his Jewish faith, not a rejection of it. Lustiger's life remains a remarkable example of how faith and identity can intersect in complex and meaningful ways.

• Moshe Emmanuel Ben-Maier. (1905–1978) I am writing this article for the

magazine I established in 1979, after Moshe Emmanuel Ben-Maier's. The Teaching from Zion magazine is now an international magazine published about four times yearly. It is mailed and shipped worldwide in full color on quality paper to all continents. It continues the work of Rabbi Moshe Emanuel Ben-Maier. Moshe Emanuel Ben-Maier was born in the Old City of Jerusalem's Jewish quarter at the turn of the 20th Century. He studied in the children's school, grew up, and lived in the Old City of Jerusalem. Around 1923, Moshe was walking from the Jewish quarter to Jaffa Gate in the old city; he encountered two English boys having a bitter fight. He stopped the fight and took these boys inside the Christ Church compound. They were children of the Anglican missionaries. Moshe started a friendly relationship with the missionaries and was challenged by the New Testament that was handed to him. Moshe Ben-Maier went to Moody Bible Institute, where he kept his orthodox lifestyle, the dietary laws, and the Shabbat. He remained a 100% faithful Orthodox Jew and 100% Disciple of Yeshua. In the 1930s, after returning

from Moody Bible Institute, Moshe began a job in the Haifa Post office. At the same time, Moshe started a Hebrew newspaper called "HaZofe! = The Observer." This newspaper was the first authentic modern Hebrew Messianic literature. Moshe continued working in the Haifa office of the Israel post office until he retired from the post office.

Moshe was persecuted heavily by most missionaries in Israel even after he and Ahuvah, his wife, moved to Jerusalem. He was persecuted not because of wrongdoing but because he was a Torah-keeping traditional Jew who was not fully converted. He kept kosher, observed Shabbat and the Jewish holidays, and attended his local synagogue in his neighborhood

on weekdays. He married an extremely dedicated, superb woman from Finland who deeply loved the Jewish people. He led a pro-Israel Christian movement that in 1956 brought the first group of volunteers from Finland to Israel by bus. This Finnish pro-Israel Movement built the Yad Hashmona settlement outside of Jerusalem and brought hundreds of volunteers to Israel, the Kibbutzim around Jerusalem, and the lower Galilee. Many of these Finnish learned excellent Hebrew, and some married Jews who also became disciples of Yeshua. Moshe Emanuel Ben-Maier and Ahuvah were significant financial support and inspiration for a small group of older adults and Hebrew University students. God's help and the Ben-Maier's made Netivyah Bible Instruction Ministry a reality. Ben-Maier and his wife were co-founders of Netivyah, and their support from Finland was the most important that enabled Netivyah to be what it is today.

The 21st Century claims several Jewish leaders. And if you indulge me, I have included myself in this listing.

- Dr. Michael L. Brown (born 1955) is a Messianic Jewish scholar, apologist, theologian, and radio host known for his work in Jewish evangelism, biblical scholarship, and defending the faith in Jewish-Christian debates. He was born into a Jewish family in New York. As a teenager, he was involved in drug use and rock music, but in 1971, he came to believe in Yeshua (Jesus) as the Messiah during the Jesus Movement. Brown firmly believes that Yeshua is the promised Jewish Messiah, fulfilling the prophecies of the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible). Brown remains a leading voice in bridging Jewish and Christian perspectives through scholarship, debate, and outreach. Attributed to Dr Brown is: "The New Testament is a thoroughly Jewish book, and Yeshua

is the Jewish Messiah who fulfills the promises made to our forefathers."

- Richard Wurmbrand (1909–2001) was a Romanian Jewish Christian pastor, theologian, and author best known for his work in underground Christian ministry and enduring torture under Communist persecution. Born as Israel Wurmbrand in Bucharest, Romania, to a Jewish family, he became an atheist and Marxist in his youth but later converted to Christianity in 1938 after encountering a Romanian Christian carpenter. Ordained as a Lutheran pastor, he remained deeply connected to his Jewish roots. He was arrested in 1948 for preaching about Yeshua (Jesus) and spent 14 years in prison, enduring horrific torture in solitary confinement and forced labor camps. He established the Voice of the Martyrs (VOM) ministry to support persecuted Christians worldwide, raising global awareness of Christian persecution, especially under Communism. Wurmbrand never abandoned his Jewish identity, believing that faith in Yeshua was the fulfillment of Judaism, not its rejection. He is quoted as stating: "My faith in Jesus as the Messiah has only deepened my love for my Jewish people."

- Joseph Shulam (b. 1946) is a prominent Messianic Jewish leader, scholar, and pastor known for his contributions to the Messianic Jewish Movement, particularly in Israel. Born in Bulgaria, Shulam was raised in a Jewish family before he became a believer in Yeshua (Jesus) as the Messiah. He became one of the founding leaders of the Messianic Jewish Movement in Israel, playing a key role in establishing several Messianic congregations. Shulam is one of the founders of the "Netivyah" congregation in Jerusalem, which has become a central hub for Messianic Jews in Israel. Known for

his scholarship in Jewish-Christian dialogue and his work on the historical and cultural background of the New Testament, Shulam emphasizes that Yeshua's teachings are deeply rooted in Jewish tradition and that the New Testament must be understood from a Jewish perspective. As a leader in the Messianic Jewish community, Shulam advocates for freedom of religion for Messianic Jews in Israel, often confronting challenges faced by Jewish believers in a predominantly Orthodox society. Shulam holds that Yeshua is the promised Messiah of the Jewish people and strongly believes in Jewish identity for Messianic believers. Joseph Shulam is considered one of the leading figures in the Messianic Jewish Movement in Israel. His work continues to influence both Messianic Jews and Christians worldwide, particularly in understanding the Jewish roots of the Christian faith. Quote: "Yeshua of Nazareth is the Messiah of Israel and the world. Life, death, and resurrection fulfill the Jewish Scriptures."

- Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum is a prominent Messianic Jewish theologian, scholar, and teacher known for his work in Jewish studies, biblical theology, and the Jewish roots of Christianity. He is widely recognized for his contributions to Messianic Judaism, particularly in understanding the relationship between the Jewish people and the Christian faith. Born in Königsberg, East Prussia (now Kaliningrad, Russia) in 1934 to a Jewish family, his family fled Nazi Germany in the 1930s and settled in the United States. Dr. Fruchtenbaum came to faith in Yeshua (Jesus) as the Messiah during his time at Yeshiva University, making him one of the most well-known Messianic Jews. Dr. Fruchtenbaum is the Founder of Ariel Ministries, an organization dedicated to spreading the message of Yeshua (Jesus) among Jews and teaching Christians about the Jewish

background of the New Testament. Dr. Fruchtenbaum is a leading figure in Jewish evangelism, advocating that Jews who believe in Yeshua are still fully Jewish and that their faith aligns with their biblical heritage. Dr. Fruchtenbaum believes that Yeshua is the Messiah of Israel and that faith in Him fulfills the promises made to the Jewish people in the Old Testament. He advocates for the belief that Jewish identity and faith in Yeshua are not mutually exclusive and that Messianic Jews should embrace their Jewish heritage and belief in Yeshua as the Messiah. Dr. Fruchtenbaum's work continues to impact the Messianic Jewish community and Christians who seek to understand the Jewish roots of their faith and the significance of Israel in God's redemptive plan. He is quoted: "The Messianic prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures find their fulfillment in Yeshua, the promised Messiah of Israel."

- Lion and Elza Erwtman In Amsterdam, Holland, Lion and Elza Erwtman built a Messianic Jewish ministry and congregation as a beacon of Jewish light for Western Europe and the only authentic example of a Messianic Jewish congregation. The Erwtman family has extended their ministry all the way to Jerusalem, Israel, through their dear daughter Lydia and son-in-law Yudah and their lovely children. I pray that God will give Rabbi Lion, Elza his wife, and his family many more successful years of ministry and a continued privilege to the messianic beacon of life in Western Europe and Israel.

I end by briefly touching on North America's so-called "messianic movement" or the leading figures instrumental in making it happen. In its beginnings, this movement started to unite Jewish disciples of Yeshua. There was brotherhood and collection of money for Israel that was given by the Messiah

College conference to be handed to the prime minister of Israel. "The Messianic Movement of America!" was established in 1975 at Messiah College in Grantham, Pennsylvania, by majority votes of the leadership gathered.

The reasons that I am not cataloging the leaders of the American Messianic movement of today are simple. There are too many to mention who do not exemplify good Jews or Disciples of Yeshua. I would have to share my experiences with people who were guests in my home in the 1970s and disappointingly later proved that they are not kosher, leading a community of disciples of Yeshua and using the title "Rabbi" applied to their portfolio. So, for this reason, I will abstain from mentioning any of the young leaders.

Few American Messianic are great men of God and scholars with worthy degrees from good universities and high moral standards, with Godly families and clean hands without usury. Initially, the Messianic Jewish Movement in North America was one united body of brothers and sisters. Today, the Movement is divided and fractured into many pieces.

I should keep doing what I have been doing for over 60 years in Israel, the USA, and more than three continents. Maybe sometime after me, in a few years, someone with a more forgiving and healthier attitude will pick up where I am leaving off—and the reality of what will happen to the American Messianic Movement of today. It is best for me not to mention names to praise or ignore and not point out leadership challenges in these late generations.

I will mention the heart and soul of the founders of this Movement. These leaders helped form the foundation of America's modern Messianic Jewish Movement. They were bridges from

the Christian Missionaries, who, for the most part, did their best to make the Jews into Goyim. They assisted in transitioning from a missionary outreach model to a local congregational and communal identity that embraces minor Jewish traditional lifestyle changes with belief in Yeshua (Jesus).

- Rabbi Leopold Cohn (1862–1937) was born in Berezna, Hungary (now part of Ukraine). He was a Hungarian Jewish rabbi who later believed that Yeshua (Jesus) was the Jewish Messiah. In 1892, he immigrated to the United States, settling in New York City, where he founded the Brownsville Mission to the Jews, later known as Chosen People Ministries. His ministry focused on sharing the message of Yeshua with the Jewish community while maintaining a strong Jewish identity. Cohn's work laid the foundation for modern Messianic Jewish outreach in America, and his organization continues to be active today. He is known to have said: "I found in Yeshua the fulfillment of all the promises God made to Israel in the Torah and the Prophets."

- Joseph Hoffman Cohn (1886–1953), continued his father's work and expanded Chosen People Ministries during the 1930s–1950s. He emphasized evangelism to the Jewish community through literature, preaching, and radio broadcasts.

- Charles Halff (1915–2000) was a Messianic Jewish evangelist, pastor, and radio broadcaster known for spreading the gospel among Jewish people and promoting the message of Yeshua (Jesus) as the Jewish Messiah. Born into a Jewish family in the United States, Halff was raised in traditional Judaism. As a young man, he came to faith in Yeshua (Jesus) and became a strong advocate for Jewish evangelism. Charles Halff established the Christian



David H. Stern , best known for his Complete Jewish Bible (CJB) and Jewish New Testament Commentary, which are widely used by Messianic Jewish congregations and believers who want to study the Bible with a Jewish perspective.

Jew Foundation (CJF), a ministry dedicated to evangelizing Jewish people and teaching Christians about the Jewish roots of their faith. His teachings also included a dispensationalist perspective, meaning he saw biblical history divided into distinct eras and strongly emphasized God’s continued plan for Israel. His radio ministry and teachings influenced many within the Messianic Jewish and evangelical Christian movements, shaping perspectives on Jewish-Christian relations.

- Manny Brotman (1930 - 1995) was the Founder of the Messianic Jewish Movement International (MJMI), one of the early organizations dedicated to promoting Messianic Jewish identity and outreach. MJMI focused on evangelizing Jewish people, disciplining Jewish believers, and helping to establish Messianic congregations across the U.S. and beyond. The organization also provided resources to churches and Christian groups, educating them on the Jewish

roots of the Christian faith and encouraging support for Jewish evangelism. Brotman was a passionate evangelist who worked tirelessly to share the gospel with Jewish people.

- Martin (Moishe) Rosen (1932–2010) Moishe Rosen was a Jewish believer in Yeshua (Jesus), evangelist, and the Founder of Jews for Jesus, one of the most well-known Jewish evangelism organizations. His work profoundly impacted Jewish-Christian relations, and he was both a controversial and influential figure in modern Messianic Jewish outreach. The organization grew into an international movement, with branches in Israel, the U.S., and other countries dedicated to sharing the gospel with Jewish communities. Moishe Rosen was a controversial but pivotal figure who pushed Jewish evangelism into public spaces with bold slogans, tracts, and street ministry.

- Paul Liberman (b. 1940) Paul Liberman is a Messianic Jewish leader, author, and businessman best known for advancing the Messianic Jewish Movement and promoting Jewish evangelism. He has

played a crucial role in shaping Messianic Jewish communities, organizations, and literature that emphasize the Jewish identity of Yeshua (Jesus) and His followers. He served as the Executive Director of the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (MJAA), a key organization that supports Messianic Jewish believers. Liberman founded the Alliance for Israel Advocacy (AIA) to mobilize Christian and Messianic Jewish support for Israel. Liberman wrote *The Fig Tree Blossoms*, an important book that explores the growth of the modern Messianic Jewish Movement.

- David H. Stern (1935–2022) David H. Stern was a Messianic Jewish theologian, scholar, and Bible translator best known for his Complete Jewish Bible (CJB) and Jewish New Testament Commentary, which are widely used by Messianic Jewish congregations and believers who want to study the Bible with a Jewish perspective. His book, *Messianic Jewish Manifesto* (later revised as *Restoring the Jewishness of the Gospel*), outlines a vision for Messianic Judaism as a biblically valid expression of Jewish faith.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joseph Shulam was born in Sofia, Bulgaria on March 24, 1946 to a Sephardic Jewish Family. In 1948, his family immigrated to Israel just before the establishment of the State. While in high school, he was introduced to the New Testament and immediately identified with the person of Yeshua. In 1981, Joseph and the small fellowship that was started in his house established one of the first official non-profit organizations of Jewish Disciples of Yeshua in Israel – Netivyah Bible Instruction Ministry. Joseph has lectured extensively and has assisted in encouraging disciples around the world. He and his wife Marcia have two children and two grandchildren.

DISCIPLES OF YESHUA UNDER HIS AUTHORITY

PLUS: TRIBUTE TO DAVID STERN

By Lion Erwtaman



What is Discipleship?

In general, discipleship is the process of learning from and following a teacher, mentor, or leader. It involves commitment, obedience, and transformation as the disciple adopts the teachings and ways of the one they follow.

What Does It Mean to Be a Disciple of Yeshua?

Being a disciple of Yeshua means more than just believing in Him—it requires following His teachings, imitating His character, and living out His mission. Yeshua Himself gave specific instructions about discipleship, called people to follow Him, and modeled through His actions how we, His disciples, should live. Following Him means that He has the authority – and therefore the worthiness – to be followed. So, what is Yeshua’s authority?

The Authority of Yeshua

We can safely say that Yeshua is G-d on earth, like Rahab’s words after she described the impact of the victories of the Israelites: “When we heard about that, our hearts melted out of anxiety. Because of you there is no courage left in anybody. Because the Lord your G-d, is G-d above in the heavens and below on earth” (Joshua 2:11). Even clearer, Zechariah says: “Many nations will join themselves to the Lord in that day and will become My people. Then I will dwell in your midst. You will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you” (Zechariah 2:11 in most English translations; verse 15 in Hebrew). Realize that the speaker who is sent by the Lord of hosts is the Lord Himself, see the final words of verse 10 (verse 14 in Hebrew): “...I am coming and I will dwell in your midst, says the Lord.”

How Did He Manifest Himself During the Ages?

After the Yetziat Mitzrayim, the exodus from Egypt, an important ‘messenger’

Being a disciple of Yeshua means more than just believing in Him—it requires following His teachings, imitating His character, and living out His mission.

or ‘angel’ walked in front of everyone. This angel who walked in front of the refugees from Egypt, as they traveled on what would become a forty-year long wilderness journey, is described in Midrash Shemot Rabbah. We learn from



Midrash
S h e m o t
Rabbah that
this angel is the
'Metatron' – Hebrew word
from Greek meaning: 'Sitting next to
the Lord on His Throne.' He is called:
the 'Sar HaPanim' – the angel of His
Presence. This angel or messenger is also
mentioned in the Machzor (prayerbook)
of Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashana. And
His name is mentioned there, being:
Yeshua.

Prophecies

Yeshua's manifestation and authority is also confirmed by Isaiah 63:8-9, "For he said, 'They are indeed my people, children who are not disloyal.' So he became their Savior. In all their troubles he was troubled. By His love and by His mercy He redeemed them, And He lifted them and carried them all the days of old." This 'Savior' is truly the successor of Moses. This is the prophet and the leader Israel had been waiting for ever since Moses described in Deuteronomy 18:15, "The Lord your G-d will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers. You must listen

to him." Likewise, in verse 18, the Lord said to Moses: "I will raise up a prophet from among their brothers like you, and I will put My words in his mouth. He will speak to them all that I command him." Again, we ought to listen to and obey the prophet promised by Moses, just as the Lord instructed us to listen to the angel who walked in front of the Exodus travelers in Exodus 23:20-21, "Behold, I am going to send an angel before you to guard you along the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Be on your guard before him and obey his voice. Don't be rebellious toward him, for he will not pardon your transgression, since My name is in him."

Yeshua's Birth

And if all this was not Dayenu, enough already, the Lord came again, this time in the manifestation of a human being. He lived among us in the land of Israel, as prophesied by prophets like Zechariah. He was born from Jewish parents, dedicated in prophetic prayer by a certain Simeon and by Anna who spoke by the guidance of G-d's spirit, and then circumcised; all on His eighth day. His birth had been discovered by wise men living in "the east," who were expecting the appearance of the King of the Jews. A certain configuration of stars testified to His birth, see Matthew 2:1-2, "After Yeshua was born in Betlehem in Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi [a caste of wise men specializing in astronomy, astrology, and natural science; our prophet Daniel in his time in Babylon had been appointed as master of the magi] from the east arrived in Jerusalem. They asked, 'Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.'"

Coincidences

In addition to the stars and the wise men from the east, the Scriptures themselves bear witness to the birth of Yeshua (Micah 5:2): "As for you, Betlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you one will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His appearances are from long ago, from days of eternity." Yeshua—the Ruler of Israel, whose appearances are from long ago—was born in Betlehem, exactly as the prophet Micah foretold. In case this usage of star configurations in the Bible creates a problem for you, I advise to compare that with the use of dice to find a new apostle – read Acts 1:26, "The apostles gave their lots. The lot fell to Matatias. He was added to the eleven apostles." This was done in order to find a replacement for the apostle Yehudah from K'riot (Judas Iscariot) who had taken his life. Back to the star configuration, Yeshua's birth was so important that it had coincidental events elsewhere, which wise people take note of and understand.

The Ultimate Sacrifice

He was baptized into the baptism of Yochanan HaMatbil, John the Baptist. And then He started teaching and performing miracles. Finally, Yeshua brought the ultimate sacrifice by giving His life for all of Israel as well as for those of the Gentiles who identified with Him and His people. According to Judaism, the Metatron would be punished while innocent. Death as a sacrifice for many is the highest spiritual payment to restore and heal what was broken. Certainly this Messiah deserves our following Him and imitating His love, purity, and attitude of serving and sustaining others. The Lord of the Shabbat was murdered by the Roman Authority, foretold by prophets like Daniel 9:26, "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be

The disciples of Yeshua need to follow their leader in doing the commandments, just as the disciples of any rabbi would imitate their rabbi's way of life.



cut off and have nothing. The people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. His end will come with a flood. Even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined". Likewise, Zechariah 12:10 prophesied, "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they [the Jews] will look on Me whom they [the Romans] have pierced. They will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son. And they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn". The Lord in the Heavens brought the Lord of the Shabbat back from the dead.

Why Did He Sacrifice Himself

It was because of the highly esteemed self-sacrifice of Yeshua that He could fulfill the role of mediator of the New Covenant and be the master of those who choose to be His disciples. Read Hebrews 9:15, "For this reason - a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant - He is the broker of a new covenant, so that those who have been called may receive the

promise of the eternal inheritance". In order to understand the content of discipleship, we need to look carefully at this verse in the letter to the 'Hebrews,' the Messianic Jews. Our master died, so that His people could be redeemed from the transgressions caused by breaking the commandments of the First Covenant of Moses. The fact that our violation of the commandments was the reason of Yeshua's death prevents any possibility of not having to do those same commandments. Likewise, the prophet Jeremiah foretold (ch. 31:31-33) that the commandments would be incorporated into the Second Covenant, which was executed by Yeshua. As His disciples, we would insult Yeshua if we claimed that He cancelled the commandments.

Importance of the Commandments

Anybody who calls herself or himself a disciple of Yeshua should take Him seriously, when, among the many sayings, He says these two things:

1. Matthew 5:17-19, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. For truly I say to you,

Whoever cancels one of the least of these commandments, and teaches people to do the same, will be called least in the Kingdom of heaven.

until heaven and earth pass away, not one yod or one projection of a letter (serif) will disappear from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever cancels one of the least of these commandments, and teaches people to do the same, will be called least in the Kingdom of heaven. But whoever performs and teaches them, will be called great in the Kingdom of heaven". These are three key points here: 1. Yeshua fulfills the commandments, like any rabbi would. 2. The validity of the commandments continues to exist. 3. The disciples of Yeshua need to follow

David Stern was a true disciple of Yeshua and his wife truly is, too.

their leader in doing the commandments, just as the disciples of any rabbi would imitate their rabbi's way of life.

2. Yochanan (John) 14:21, "The person who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father. And I will love him and will disclose Myself to him." See also verses 23-24, "... "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him. And We will come to him and make Our abode with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words. And the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me." How does a disciple express love, honor, and appreciation for the master? Not only by words, but also by deeds.

David Stern

Taking the authority of Yeshua seriously and loving the Torah and following it, all forms the basis of our being disciples of Yeshua. And because the New Testament is filled with Yeshua's sayings and with quotes from our Jewish prophets, we

can safely say that the Gospel is Jewish. In 1998, I had the honor to receive the request to translate a book written by David Stern. In English this book of his is called: Restoring the Jewishness of the Gospel. In Dutch, I translated the title as: The Gospel is Jewish; a Rehabilitation (Het Evangelie is Joods ... een eerherstel). Later on, we invited him and his dear wife Martha to one of our seven international conferences and asked David to be one of our speakers. He gladly agreed, and since then, the friendship between David and Martha and my wife Elze and me has been warm and cordial. At David's funeral, I felt the loss of his personality emotionally, but was comforted knowing that he went ahead of us to our heavenly final destination. David Stern was a true disciple of Yeshua and his wife truly is, too.

Basic Message of Yeshua

In all the wisdom of Yeshua's teachings, His focus is always on the heavenly Kingdom, as well as the corrections in behavior His followers need to apply in order to enter the Kingdom. Additionally, we must recognize our own weakness and vulnerability to experience deep healing and growth. This latter conscious choice is the subject of an interesting conversation between Yeshua and a highly interested Jewish leader. We find this scene in the Gospel

of Yochanan (John) 3:1-5, "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nakdimon ben Guryon, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Yeshua by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from G-d as Teacher. For no one can do these signs that You do unless G-d is with him." Yeshua answered him: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born from the heavens, he cannot see the kingdom of G-d." Nakdimon asked Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, now can he?"

Ben Guryon in Action

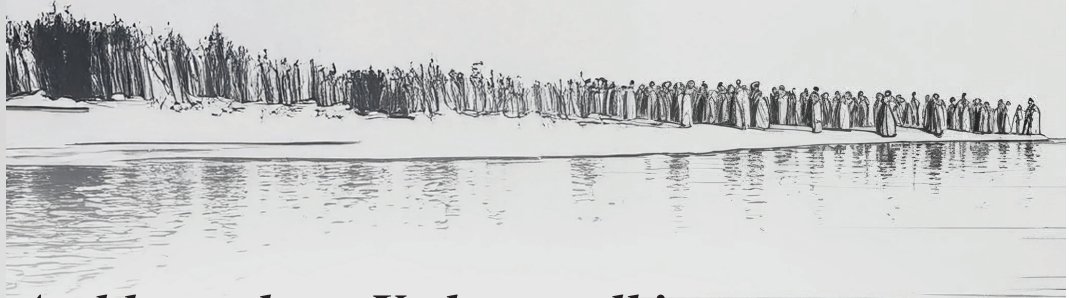
Many might expect Yeshua to respond to the recognition by Nakdimon with great excitement. This rich leader was a wonder-worker, said to cause the sun after sunset to come back and shine. He was well known in the Jewish community of the first century and mentioned in one version of a tannaitic story (Sifre Deut. 305; cf. Mekh. Bahodesh). Nakdimon, called Nicodemus in the Bible, recognized Yeshua unmistakably from a description by our prophet Joel 2:23, "Rejoice, sons of Tzion, and be glad in Adonai your G-d. For He has given you the early rain, meaning the teacher for righteousness. And He has poured down for you the rain, The early rain, moreh (teacher) and the latter rain as before." The play on words Joel is using

Yeshua went on a trip and He took with Him Peter and Ya'akov and Yochanan his brother. He led them up on a high mountain (Tavor?), only them. He was transfigured before them. His face was shining as intense as the sun. His garments became as white as light. Moses and Elijah appeared to them. They were talking with Him."

is wonderful. The Hebrew word ‘moreh’ means ‘early rain,’ and also ‘teacher.’ Thus, Nakdimon recognized that Yeshua came to His people as a ‘moreh’—as the early rain, as a teacher, better known as the Teacher of Righteousness (Moreh Tzedek) also mentioned in some of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The prophet Joel mentions all this in the context of the coming Kingdom, with promises of restoration, rehabilitation, and rich harvests. This is why Yeshua responds as He does. Nakdimon doesn’t use the word Kingdom, but the keyword being The Teacher refers to it. Yeshua says that you cannot see the coming Kingdom. The true disciple which Nakdimon is, be it in secret, is why he approached Yeshua by night, longing for the Kingdom. And Yeshua makes clear what disciples need to do to experience the Kingdom. They need to be born ‘min hashamayim,’ from the heavens, which is also an expression that stems from one of our prophets. By the way, the first Prime Minister of the State of Israel David Ben-Gurion named himself after this Nakdimon ben Guryon purposely.

The Loving Consolation of Adonai

In order to find out which prophet, you need to look at the question Nakdimon poses and Yeshua’s response. They didn’t talk about speaking in tongues. Nakdimon talks jokingly about the womb of his mother and going into it in order to be born twice. Yeshua responds by making the contrast between those born from the flesh and those born from G-d’s Spirit. The word womb is the second keyword here. The Hebrew for “womb” used by our prophet Hoshea is racham, which also means: to have compassion. Hoshea predicts that Israel will return to the land, which has been taking place on a vast scale since 1948. Now read Hoshea 2:23, where the Lords says regarding Israel: “I will sow her for Myself in the land. I will also have



And how about Yeshua walking on water and even inviting Peter to follow His example? Is this kind of supernatural walk on water part of the general discipleship package?

compassion on her who had not obtained compassion (Hebrew: Lo-ruhamah). And I will say to those who were not My people, ‘You are My people!’ And they will each say, ‘You are my G-d!’” In other words, the Lord is inviting people who are going to see the Kingdom before their eyes, to receive His compassion and loving consolation, His racham, His womb. Disciples will enjoy G-d’s healing comfort as they are born from above, from His spiritual womb. A feminine aspect inside the godhead. Compare that with the interesting choice of words by Yeshua, when He says: “O Jerusalem! Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I have wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it!” (Luke 13:34).

Interesting Challenges to Discipleship

There are some interesting challenges in all there is said by and about Yeshua, whose disciples we are. What about having to ‘hate’ our family? I’m sure Yeshua means well and we must make

sure that He is number one in our lives. We can love our family and bury them when that time has come, as long as we don’t allow circumstances to have distracting power over us. And how about Yeshua walking on water and even inviting Peter to follow His example? Is this kind of supernatural walk on water part of the general discipleship package? Or are there believers on higher spiritual levels, like Daniel 6:21-22 describes, when king Darius of the Medes runs to the lion’s den where Daniel has spent the night to be devoured? The king calls Daniel with a shaky voice, and to his delight Daniel responds like this: “O king, live forever! My G-d sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths. They have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him. And also before you, O king, I have committed no crime.” This kind of calmness is high level spirituality which has been displayed from faithful disciples in dire situations.

Discipleship Training Level 2.0

Finally, the Transfiguration of Yeshua



was definitely something for a selected audience. Only three disciples were allowed to experience it. One was Peter, who had the level of being entrusted with the keys of the Kingdom (read Matthew 16:19). The other two were also special. They were Ya'akov (Jacob) and Yochanan (John), who are miracle workers with fire (see Luke 9:54). We read about the transfiguration in Matthew 17, with an introduction by Yeshua in the last verse of Matthew 16, "Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." The disciples would experience literally seeing the Kingdom. Let's read this as our peek into discipleship training level 2.0: "Six days later (after this introduction) Yeshua went on a trip and He took with Him Peter and Ya'akov and Yochanan his brother. He led them up on a high mountain (Tavor?), only them. He was transfigured before them. His

Yeshua has all the authority and worthiness necessary to be followed. This is the Jewish Messiah with all credentials to make Him trustworthy and safe to give our lives into His hands.

face was shining as intense as the sun. His garments became as white as light. Moses and Elijah appeared to them. They were talking with Him."

Spiritual Discretion and Insight as Disciples

Matthew 17 continues, "Peter suggested to Yeshua, 'Lord, it comes in handy that we are here. If You wish, I will make three sukkot, one for You, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them. A voice out of the cloud said, 'This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased. Listen to Him!' When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified. Yeshua

came to them and touched them. And He said, 'Get up, and do not be afraid.' And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one except Yeshua Himself alone. As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, 'Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.'" The three booths suggestion was appropriate, since Zechariah 14:16 tells us, "Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths." The three disciples had the honor of being allowed to see the heavenly reality of living in the Kingdom. Not all of us will have this high level experience, but knowing about this adds to our spiritual discretion and insight as disciples.

Conclusion

Yeshua has all the authority and worthiness necessary to be followed. This is the Jewish Messiah with all credentials to make Him trustworthy and safe to give our lives into His hands. He is strong and performs miracles, but also full of empathy and suffering as we suffer, "I shall make mention of the lovingkindnesses of the LORD ... In all their affliction He was afflicted (Isaiah 63:9)". He is Shilo to whom the nations will be obedient. And our following and obedience means being great in the Kingdom by doing His commandments (Matthew 5:19) and allowing Him to transform us into His servants with the most pleasant characters and behavior one can find on earth.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lion Erwtaman, together with his wife Elze, is the cofounder, leader, and teacher of Beth Yeshua, a Messianic Jewish congregation located in Amsterdam. Nearing 30 years, they have been ministering to the congregation through teachings, worship, music, and dance, and Lion's organization is a long-standing partner of Netivyah in Jerusalem which is led by his son-in-law Yuda Bachana. Originally a biologist and viola player, Lion also completed studies related to Tanakh, Talmud, and New Testament. Lion and Elze are blessed with three children and five grandchildren.

www.youtube.com/c/bethyeshuaamsterdam | beth-yeshua.nl/en

There's a lot more to Netivyah than meets the eye; the Teaching From Zion magazine is only one of our outreach and humanitarian ministries. We invite you to connect with the other branches of our ministry.

Publications

Publishing is one of Netivyah's top priorities, as we see education as being central to our existence. Visit our website for previous issues of Teaching from Zion, as well as a selection of our books.

Congregation

Roeh Israel, "Shepherd of Israel," is a Messianic Jewish Congregation in Jerusalem. The Congregation is made up of followers of Yeshua, both Jews and non-Jews, who worship together in a traditional synagogue environment.

Humanitarian Aid

There are many families in Israel, even entire sections of the population, who fall between the cracks. Hamotzi Food Distribution Center is a place that literally brings forth food for local needy families in Jerusalem. Without charities and organizations like Netivyah, they would not be able to put food on the table.

Video Teachings

The world is watching videos online, so we are producing high quality teaching videos in English and Hebrew and publishing them on the internet to continue to present the Good News to the world in its original Jewish and Hebrew culture.



Netivyah נתיביה



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