

The Messianic Movement (Seminar 2)

This powerful teaching takes us on a 2,000-year journey through the often-overlooked Jewish foundations of our Christian faith. We discover that the Messianic movement isn't something new or trendy, but rather a return to the original faith practiced by Yeshua and His first disciples. The presentation challenges us to ask honest questions: Why does the Old Testament sometimes feel disconnected from modern church life? If Jesus and His followers were Jewish, why don't our congregations reflect that same faith? Through careful examination of Scripture, from Jeremiah's call to seek the ancient paths to Paul's olive tree metaphor in Romans 11, we see that understanding the Jewish context of our faith isn't optional—it's foundational. The Old Testament makes up 77% of our Bible, yet many of us have been taught to overlook it. This teaching invites us to rediscover the fullness of Scripture, to see how Gentile believers are grafted into Israel's story rather than replacing it, and to understand that observing God's commandments isn't legalism but a loving response to grace. As we stand at the crossroads Jeremiah described, we're invited to embrace the complete counsel of God's Word and find the rest for our souls that comes from walking in His ancient, unchanging truth.

Title: Returning to the Messianic Faith: A Historical Journey from Yeshua to Today

Sermon Summary: This teaching traces the 2,000-year history of the Messianic faith, from its origins with Yeshua (Jesus) and his Jewish disciples in first-century Israel through its transformation into Gentile Christianity and its modern restoration. The sermon emphasizes that understanding the Jewish foundations of Christianity is not about adopting something new, but returning to what always was. It explores how the faith that began as distinctly Jewish gradually separated from its roots through historical and political events, particularly after 70 AD and through church councils like Nicaea. The teaching culminates in explaining the modern Messianic movement's emergence in the 1960s-70s and its role in God's prophetic plan to unite Jews and Gentiles in Messiah, preparing for the restoration of all things and Yeshua's return to Jerusalem.

Key Points:

- The Old Testament comprises 77% of the Bible and is foundational to understanding Yeshua, not just background information
- The Messianic faith originated in first-century Israel as Jewish people awaited the promised Messiah, the son of David
- Yeshua and all his first followers were Jewish, practicing a distinctly Jewish faith including Sabbath observance and feast celebrations
- Gentiles were grafted into Israel's faith, not replacing it, forming one people in Messiah
- Between 70-300 AD, historical events and political pressures caused Gentile Christianity to separate from its Jewish roots
- Replacement theology emerged, teaching that the church replaced Israel in God's promises, leading to centuries of anti-Jewish sentiment
- The modern Messianic movement began in the 1960s-70s during the Jesus Movement, with Jewish believers reclaiming their identity while following Yeshua
- Israel's rebirth in 1948 was seen as prophetic fulfillment, signaling God's continued plan for his people
- The Messianic faith is not legalism but a response of love, embracing the fullness of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation
- True Messianic believers affirm salvation by grace through faith alone while honoring God's commandments as written on their hearts

Scripture References:

- Jeremiah 6:16 - "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths"
- Jeremiah 31:31-34 - The promise of the new covenant with Israel and Judah
- Luke 1:30-33 - Angel's promise that Yeshua would reign on David's throne over Jacob forever
- Luke 2:25-26 - Simeon waiting for the consolation of Israel
- Acts 1:11 - Yeshua's return to Jerusalem
- Romans 11:1-5 - God has not rejected his people Israel

- Romans 11 (entire chapter) - Gentiles grafted into Israel's olive tree
- Ephesians 2 - Gentiles sharing in Israel's promises through Messiah
- Matthew 5 - Yeshua did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it
- Ezekiel 37:21-22 - God gathering Israel back to their land under one king
- Ezekiel 49 - God will be a light to the Gentiles
- Genesis 12 - God's promise to Abraham to bless all nations
- Zechariah 8 - Messiah's return to Jerusalem
- Jude 1:3 - The faith once delivered to the saints
- Isaiah 49 - Salvation for Israel and light to the Gentiles

Stories:

- The account of Simeon in Jerusalem waiting to see the Messiah before his death, recognizing baby Yeshua as salvation for both Israel and the Gentiles
- The historical destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD by the Romans and the subsequent scattering of Jewish people
- The Council of Nicaea (325 AD) where Constantine separated Easter from Passover to distance Christianity from Jewish practices
- The harsh anti-Jewish writings of John Chrysostom (the "Golden Mouth"), demonstrating the depth of replacement theology's influence
- The Jesus Movement of the 1960s-70s bringing thousands to faith, including many Jewish believers who formed the modern Messianic movement
- Israel's miraculous rebirth as a nation in 1948 after 2,000 years of dispersion, seen as prophetic fulfillment
- The boat analogy: believers on a boat throwing life preservers to drowning people, with a special call to go to the back of the boat to save God's people Israel

Scripture References from the Sermon

Explicitly Mentioned References

1. ****Jeremiah 6:16**** - "Stand at the crossroads and look. Ask for the ancient paths."
2. ****Zechariah 8**** - Jesus returning to Jerusalem
3. ****Acts 1:11**** - Jesus ascending and returning to Jerusalem
4. ****Luke 2:25-26**** - Simeon waiting for the consolation of Israel
5. ****Luke 2:30-32**** - Simeon's prophecy about salvation and light to the Gentiles
6. ****Luke 1:30-33**** - Angel's announcement to Mary about Jesus
7. ****Jeremiah 31:31**** - The new covenant with Israel
8. ****Jeremiah 31:31-34**** - Full context of the new covenant promise
9. ****Acts 2**** - Outpouring of the Holy Spirit
10. ****Acts 2-10**** - Early Jewish believers
11. ****Acts 15**** - Council of Jerusalem
12. ****Isaiah 49**** - God as a light to the Gentiles
13. ****Romans 11**** - Gentiles grafted into Israel
14. ****Romans 11:1-5**** - God has not rejected His people
15. ****Ezekiel 37:21-22**** - God gathering Israel back to their land
16. ****Genesis 12**** - God's promise to Abraham to bless all nations
17. ****Jude 1:3**** - The faith once delivered to the saints
18. ****Matthew 5**** - Jesus came to fulfill, not abolish the law
19. ****Ephesians 2**** - Gentiles sharing in God's promises through Jesus
20. ****Hebrews 8**** - New covenant with God's law written on hearts

Additional References Alluded To

21. ****Leviticus 23**** - The appointed feasts/holy days
22. ****Exodus 20**** - The Ten Commandments (specifically the Sabbath as the 4th commandment)
23. ****Ezekiel (general)**** - Prophecies about Israel's restoration
24. ****Daniel 6**** - Daniel in the lion's den (Babylonian context)

Relevant Verses for Main Themes Discussed

On Israel's Centrality in Scripture

- ****Romans 9:4-5**** - Israel's adoption, glory, covenants, and the Messiah
- ****Romans 15:8**** - Christ became a servant to the Jews to confirm God's promises

On Jewish Roots of Faith

- ****John 4:22**** - "Salvation is from the Jews"
- ****Romans 3:1-2**** - The advantage of being Jewish; entrusted with God's Word

On Unity of Jew and Gentile

- ****Galatians 3:28**** - No distinction in Christ
- ****Ephesians 2:11-22**** - One new man from Jew and Gentile
- ****Colossians 2:16-17**** - Shadows of things to come

On the Old Testament's Importance

- ****2 Timothy 3:16**** - All Scripture is God-breathed
- ****Luke 24:27**** - Jesus explained Himself from all the Scriptures

- **Luke 24:44** - The Law, Prophets, and Psalms must be fulfilled

On Obedience and Grace

- **John 14:15** - "If you love me, keep my commands"
- **James 2:17** - Faith without works is dead
- **Titus 2:11-14** - Grace teaches us to live godly lives

On Israel's Future Restoration

- **Romans 11:25-26** - All Israel will be saved
- **Zechariah 12:10** - They will look on the one they pierced
- **Zechariah 14:4** - Jesus' feet on the Mount of Olives

On the Messianic Hope

- **Isaiah 9:6-7** - A child is born, throne of David forever
- **Micah 5:2** - Ruler from Bethlehem
- **Isaiah 53** - The suffering servant

Discipleship

Discussion Questions

How does understanding the Jewish origins of Christianity change or deepen your personal relationship with Jesus as the Messiah of Israel?

What might it mean for Gentile believers to be 'grafted into' Israel's olive tree rather than replacing it, and how does this affect our identity in Christ?

Why do you think the Old Testament, which comprises 77% of the Bible, is often neglected in modern Christian teaching and practice?

How can we distinguish between honoring God's commandments out of love and gratitude versus falling into legalism or works-based salvation?

What role does Israel play in God's end-times plan, and why might understanding this be important for believers today?

How did replacement theology develop historically, and what are its ongoing effects on Jewish-Christian relations and biblical interpretation?

In what ways might observing the biblical Sabbath and feast days enrich our understanding of Jesus' life, ministry, and prophetic fulfillment?

What does it mean practically for Jews and Gentiles to be 'one new man' in Messiah while maintaining their distinct identities?

How do we respond to the tension between embracing the ancient paths of faith and the traditions we have inherited from centuries of church history?

What does Jeremiah's call to 'ask for the ancient paths' reveal about God's desire for His people to understand the foundations of their faith?

Small Group Study Guide

The Messianic Movement: A Historical Overview (Part 2)

Opening Prayer

Begin your time together by asking God to open hearts and minds to understand the Jewish foundations of faith and to help the group grow closer to Yeshua (Jesus) as He truly is.

Introduction & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

****Icebreaker Question:****

Before today's study, how much did you think about Israel or the Jewish context of Jesus in your daily faith? What shaped your previous understanding?

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. ****The Messianic faith originated in the Old Testament**** - 77% of our Bible provides the foundation for understanding Jesus/Yeshua
2. ****The first believers were entirely Jewish**** - The early church was a Messianic community for approximately 50-100 years after Christ
3. ****Historical separation occurred**** - Between 70-325 AD, Gentile Christianity began separating from its Jewish roots
4. ****Replacement theology emerged**** - The false teaching that the church replaced Israel in God's promises
5. ****Modern restoration is happening**** - Since the 1960s-70s, there's been a return to understanding the Jewish foundations of faith
6. ****This is prophetic fulfillment**** - Israel's rebirth (1948) and the Messianic movement are part of God's end-times plan

Discussion Questions

Section 1: Understanding Our Foundation (15-20 minutes)

1. **The Old Testament Connection**

- Why do you think 77% of our Bible is the Old Testament? What does this tell us about its importance?
- How does understanding that the New Testament is a *continuation* rather than a *replacement* of the Old Testament change how we read Scripture?

2. **Jeremiah's Ancient Paths**

- Read Jeremiah 6:16 together: *"Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls."*
- What "ancient paths" might we have lost sight of in modern Christianity?
- How do we balance honoring tradition with seeking biblical truth?

Section 2: First Century Faith (15-20 minutes)

3. **Messianic Expectation**

- Discuss Luke 2:25-32 (Simeon's encounter with baby Jesus). What was Simeon waiting for?
- How does understanding that Jesus came as the Jewish Messiah to Israel *and* the nations impact your view of the Gospel?

4. **Jewish Identity of Early Believers**

- The sermon stated that all first believers were Jewish for 50-100 years. How does this challenge common assumptions about early Christianity?
- Read Acts 2-10. What evidence do you see of the Jewish nature of the early church?

Section 3: The Great Separation (15-20 minutes)

5. **Historical Changes**

- What were the main factors that caused Gentile Christianity to separate from its Jewish roots (70 AD destruction, Roman persecution, Council of Nicaea)?
- How did changing Sabbath to Sunday and Passover to Easter reflect this separation?

6. **Replacement Theology**

- What is replacement theology (supersessionism)? Why is it problematic?
- Read Romans 11:1-5 and 11:17-24. What does Paul clearly say about God's relationship with Israel?
- Have you encountered replacement theology in your own Christian experience? How?

Section 4: Modern Restoration (15-20 minutes)

7. **Israel's Rebirth**

- Why is Israel becoming a nation again in 1948 significant prophetically?

- Read Ezekiel 37:21-22. How does modern Israel relate to biblical prophecy?

8. ****The Messianic Movement Today****

- What is the difference between "Hebrew Christians" and "Messianic Jews"?
- How does the modern Messianic movement seek to unite rather than divide Jewish and Gentile believers?

Section 5: Addressing Concerns (15-20 minutes)

9. ****Common Objections****

The sermon addressed five common concerns. Discuss these:

- ****"We don't need the Old Testament"**** - How would you respond?
- ****"Following God's law is legalism"**** - What's the difference between legalism and loving obedience?
- ****"The Sabbath and feasts aren't for us"**** - Should Gentile believers observe these? Why or why not?
- ****"God is done with Israel"**** - What does Scripture actually say?
- ****"Messianic believers deny Jesus' divinity"**** - Is this a fair characterization?

10. ****Personal Reflection****

- Which of these objections have you heard or perhaps believed yourself?
- How has this study challenged or confirmed your thinking?

Practical Applications

For Personal Growth

****This Week:****

1. ****Read Romans 9-11**** in one sitting. Journal about what Paul says concerning Israel, the Gentiles, and God's faithfulness.
2. ****Study the Old Testament context**** of a New Testament passage you love. Use cross-references to see how it connects to Israel's story.
3. ****Examine your Bible reading habits.**** Are you reading the Old Testament regularly, or do you focus primarily on the New Testament?

****This Month:****

1. ****Research one biblical feast**** (Passover, Pentecost/Shavuot, Tabernacles/Sukkot). Learn its Old Testament origins and New Testament fulfillment in Jesus.
2. ****Pray for Israel and the Jewish people**** regularly, asking God to open their eyes to Yeshua as Messiah.
3. ****Challenge replacement theology**** when you encounter it, gently pointing people to Romans 11.

For Group Engagement

1. ****Host a Passover Seder**** together to understand how Jesus celebrated it and what it reveals about His sacrifice.

2. ****Watch a documentary**** together about Israel's modern history or the Messianic movement in Israel today.

3. ****Invite a Messianic believer**** (Jewish or Gentile) to share their testimony and perspective with your group.

4. ****Start a prayer focus**** for Israel, Jerusalem, and the peace of God's people.

Reflection Questions for Journaling

- How has my understanding of Jesus/Yeshua changed through this study?
- What does it mean for me personally that Jesus was Jewish and lived as a faithful Jew?
- How can I honor the Jewish foundations of my faith without appropriating Jewish identity?
- What "ancient paths" is God calling me to rediscover?
- How does understanding God's ongoing plan for Israel affect my view of the end times?

Key Scriptures to Study Further

- ****Jeremiah 6:16**** - The ancient paths
- ****Jeremiah 31:31-34**** - The New Covenant with Israel and Judah
- ****Luke 2:25-32**** - Messianic expectation
- ****Romans 9-11**** - God's faithfulness to Israel (especially 11:1-2, 11:17-24)

- **Ephesians 2:11-22** - One new man in Messiah
- **Ezekiel 37:21-28** - Restoration of Israel
- **Acts 15** - Jerusalem Council and Gentile inclusion

The Boat Illustration: A Call to Action

The sermon concluded with a powerful illustration of a boat heading to its destination:

- The boat represents God's salvation plan
- People throw life preservers (the Gospel) to those drowning
- God asks some to go to the **back** of the boat—to reach the Jewish people

Discussion:

- How does this illustration challenge you?
- Is God calling you to be one who goes to the "back of the boat"?
- What does it mean practically to support God's work among the Jewish people?

Closing Prayer Points

1. **Thanksgiving** for the Jewish roots of our faith and for Jesus/Yeshua, the Jewish Messiah

2. ****Confession**** for any ways we've ignored or dismissed Israel's significance
3. ****Intercession**** for:
 - Jewish people to recognize Yeshua as Messiah
 - Unity between Jewish and Gentile believers
 - Protection and peace for Israel
 - The Messianic movement worldwide
4. ****Commitment**** to study Scripture more fully, from Genesis to Revelation
5. ****Openness**** to whatever God is teaching us about the "ancient paths"