

**Messianic Judaism
and
The Ideal Messianic Congregation
by
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Messianic Jewish belief and practice is not entirely uniform throughout the Messianic Jewish movement. What follows are my views, which I believe are also the views of Tikkun International, my congregation's apostolic oversight organization:

- We believe that Yeshua is our fully divine Messiah, who was made flesh for a season in order to sacrifice Himself for our sins, so that whomsoever of us repents and receives Him as Lord, may have eternal life with God.
- We look to the Bible, both the *Tanakh* and the *K'tvey B'rit Chadasha* (New Testament) as inerrant authoritative guidance from God. We seek interpretive application of the Scriptures as well as prophetic guidance from the *Ru'ach HaKodesh* (the Holy Spirit), who indwells all "born again" believers In Yeshua.
- We consult rabbinic literature (e.g. the *Talmud*, *midrash*, commentaries, etc.) for cultural information and to understand Jewish points of view and practices, but we do not consider rabbinic literature inspired, or authoritative in the same way as Scripture.
- We put a high priority on maintaining our relationship with God through prayer that is mediated by the *Ruach HaKodesh* (the Holy Spirit). We believe that the gifts of the Holy Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12:7-10, 28 are operative today, as are the five-fold ministries listed in Ephesians 4:11-12.
- We consider the land of Israel to be our home of prophetic destiny, and we consider our homeland in the diaspora to be a kind of ambassadorial outpost from where we serve both God and our fellow man.
- Messianic Jewish congregations such as ours are generally populated by both Jews and Gentiles who, while retaining their respective identities, worship and serve together in unity and spiritual equality. We refer to the Jews in our congregations as "Messianic Jews," and to Gentiles who are permanently committed to Jewish community and a Jewish way of life as "*K'rovei Yisrael*" (close family members of Israel). We use the term "Christian" for Gentile brother and sister believers in Yeshua who identify more closely with Christian culture than with Jewish culture. Marriage between Jews and *K'rovei Yisrael* within our congregations is common and the children they produce are considered fully Jewish.
- Although we acknowledge that there are certain covenantal obligations unique to Jews, we place no limitations on Gentiles regarding congregational participation, leadership, or other aspects of synagogue life.

- Our congregations are led by a senior leader (rabbi) who is accountable to a plurality of elders. The elders are, in turn, accountable to an apostolic network of five-fold gift ministers (Ephesians 4:11) and congregational leaders.
- Disputes among our congregational members that are not resolved privately are referred for mediation and/or adjudication (pursuant to Matthew 18:15-17) to our congregation's elders and their decision can, in turn, be appealed to our apostolic network.
- Our congregations provide us with a place in which to enjoy Messianic Jewish community life. They also provide us with spiritual protection through plural elder oversight, biblical teaching, discipleship training, supportive fellowship, and assistance in fulfilling our respective Jewish and Gentile covenantal responsibilities. They are also platforms from which we study the Old and New Covenant Scriptures, worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, pray together, serve one another, and seek to bless those on the outside through preaching the *B'sorah* (Gospel) of Yeshua, and through service of various kinds.
- We employ elements of the Hebrew *Siddur* (Jewish prayer book) in our prayers, and we pray spontaneously as well. Our services loosely follow a Jewish liturgical format, and include New Covenant elements as well, such as the "*Shulchan Adonai*" (the Lord's Supper) and contemporary musical praise and worship. The *Sh'ma* and *Amidah* prayers are standard and, on *Shabbat* mornings, we read from the *Torah* and other parts of the Bible in a traditional ceremony known as a *Torah* service. The *Kaddish* is recited as a memorial prayer, and most of our services conclude with a biblical message given by a rabbi or elder.
- The practices in our homes and synagogues are culturally Jewish. We keep the Sabbath, observe the commanded Feasts and Holy Days, abide by the biblical food laws (some of us keep the rabbinical food laws as well), and keep such other biblical commandments as are applicable in the New Covenant. When it appears that we cannot or should not do so, we seek the *Ru'ach HaKodesh* for interpretive guidance.
- We seek to internalize and practice God's standard of Holiness.
- Our communities observe the cycle of Jewish life, to-wit, *b'rit milah* (covenant circumcision), *pidyon ha-ben* (redemption of the firstborn Jewish male), *b'nei mitzvah* or its equivalent for Gentiles (coming of age recognition), *chupah* (marriage), burial following death, *shivah* (mourning), and *yahrzeiten* (annual remembrances).
- We do not celebrate the Christian holidays of Christmas and Easter, but we do recount the history of Yeshua's birth and the biblical importance of His resurrection at other times of the year. We also do not display Christian symbols such as crosses, pictures of "Jesus," etc., in either our homes or synagogues for cultural reasons.
- Our congregations seek to be active in Jewish affairs. We support the Nation of Israel, and oppose its enemies. We do not always agree with Israel's political decisions, but we support its right to defend itself and to exist as the biblically prophesied Jewish homeland.
- Our primary outreach is to our Jewish people who do not yet know Yeshua as Messiah. We also seek to fulfill God's expectation of us (as a Jewish community) to be a light to the Gentiles. This

includes helping our Christian brothers to rediscover their connection to the Jewish people that was lost in the course of the Church's early history.

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