

**Toward Redefining Messianic Jewish Engagement With the Wider Jewish World:  
Reflections on Mark Kinzer's "Post Missionary Messianic Judaism"**

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This paper attempts a preliminary consideration of how the paradigm shift embodied in Mark Kinzer's Post Missionary Messianic Judaism (2005) transforms imagining, defining and implementing Messianic Jewish engagement with the wider Jewish world. I will refer to Mark's perspective as "The Emerging Messianic Jewish Paradigm" (TEMJP), focusing on the ecclesiological implications of Kinzer's model and contrast this with what I will term "The Standard Jewish Missions Paradigm" (TSJMP), which model, in whole or in part, underlies not only missionary approaches to the Jewish people, but also how many in the Union of Messianic Jewish congregations themselves imagine, define, and implement their own engagement with the wider Jewish world.

Briefly outlined, my presentation is as follows:

1. After first summarizing and explaining TEMJP,
2. I will then contrast it with some aspects of TSJMP.
3. Referencing materials from Hebrews, Romans, and parts of *Tanach*, I will examine how operating out of TEMJP will result in a different, missiologically and biblically/theologically preferable Messianic Jewish engagement with the wider Jewish world than has been possible and evident operating out of TSJMP.

### **Explaining The Emerging Messianic Jewish Paradigm**

The essential elements of TEMJP, as outlined in Kinzer's book, may be expressed as seven elements, briefly stated and defended as follows.

- 1. God is honored by Jewish Torah obedience. This applies no less to Messianic Jews than to the wider Jewish community.**

In the Older Testament this is evident from narrative texts concerning the giving of the Law (Exodus 19-20; Deuteronomy 4:5-8). In addition, prophecies concerning Jewish renewal at the end of days state that this end-time turning to God will include a renewal of Torah obedience (e.g., Deuteronomy 30:1-10, and Ezekiel 36:24-27). The Newer Testament also extols Jewish Torah obedience for all Jews, including Jewish Yeshua believers. Luke-Acts highlights the Torah obedience and Jewish piety of Zechariah and Elizabeth (Lk 1:6); Mary, Joseph, and the child Jesus (Lk 2:21-24, 27, 39-51); Simeon and Anna (Lk 2:25-26, 36-38); Jesus Himself (Lk 4:16 and many others); and the Church in Jerusalem (Acts 21:17-26). Clearly, Jewish Torah obedience for all Jews was presumed to be the God-ordained norm.

- 2. Such Torah-faithful Messianic Jews form the living link whereby the Church from among the nations is joined to the Commonwealth of Israel, and serve the Church by helping her reconceive of her identity and vocation as rooted in that of Israel.**

The One New Man of Ephesians, chapter two, expresses a unity of two distinct communal realities living together not in uniformity, but rather in love and mutual blessing. These two distinct realities are the Yeshua believers in Israel living as Yeshua's people in Torah-based Jewish piety, and the Church from among the

nations, serving Him in their own contexts, apart from the requirements of Jewish piety. This is why Paul was insistent that Gentile Yeshua believers should not become circumcised and seek to keep the Law: not because the Law is wrong, but because it is not God's call and will for Gentiles, who become part of the people of God through Christ alone. This is also why James expected Paul to model Jewish piety, but said he required no such thing of the Gentiles who have believed (Acts 21:24-25), and this is why the Jerusalem Council disputed long ("much debate," Acts 15:6) before deciding that Gentiles did not need to be circumcised, and required to keep the Torah. This dispute only occurred because Jewish Yeshua believers assumed they were responsible for continuing to do so. Their debate was over whether the requirement of Torah-obedience applied to Gentiles as well (see Acts 15:1-21). Rather than superseding the Jewish people, the Church instead joins with them as part of the Commonwealth of Israel. Only in this way can the "dividing wall of hostility" – which supessionism maintains – be removed, with Israel and the Church living in the peace Yeshua established rather than in competitive enmity.

**3. Understanding her identity and vocation in this context, the Church will celebrate and support Jewish covenant faithfulness, seeing Yeshua-faith in the power of the Holy Spirit as its perfect embodiment, and will partner with Torah-faithful Messianic Jews as one ekklesia.**

By being joined as one ekklesia with the Torah obedient Jewish Yeshua-believers, the Church becomes part of the Commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:12-14), and therefore celebrates all of the God-given distinctives of Israel, including her Torah obedience. This position contrasts sharply with the denigration of Jewish Torah

obedience so common in Christian thought and feeling. The Church joins with Israel without taking on her unique Torah responsibilities. This balance of unity and diversity is further highlighted in Ephesians 3:6, where Paul says “Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.” The terms “fellow heirs, fellow members, and fellow partakers” require another communal reality with whom the Gentiles are joined, Jewish Yeshua-believers living as part of wider Israel.

- 4. Messianic Jewish outreach to the wider Jewish community involves revealing the Presence of Yeshua amidst Jewish life rather than importing Him as an outsider or exporting Jewish Yeshua-believers to other communities.**

The Jewish Yeshua believers of the Newer Testament believed that in a mysterious manner the Messiah had been with Israel throughout its history (1 Corinthians 10:1-4; Ephesians 2:12). Because of this, they saw in all of Israel’s sacred institutions (e.g., the Temple, the holidays, the Jubilee year) signs of the Messiah’s presence, and proclaimed him to be the fulfillment of Judaism rather than its nullification. Although Jewish communal life has developed over the past two thousand years without explicit faith in Yeshua, we find him present there nevertheless, just as Joseph provided for his brothers who rejected him even before he revealed his identity to them.

- 5. Such outreach proclaims the Name of Jesus, not the neediness of Jews.**

Sometimes mission approaches to the Jewish people include the assumption or even declaration of the emptiness and inadequacy of Jewish religious practice and faith. In

contrast, the apostolic motivation for outreach to Jewish people was driven by the realization that in Yeshua, the long awaited Messiah had come. The oft-quoted passage, “There is no other name given among mortals by which we must be saved,” comes in a context where Peter and John were seeking to lift up the name of Jesus rather than put down the Jewish people: “for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:12, 20). We would do well to imitate their example and lift up the name of Yeshua without denigrating the holy things already given to the Jewish people (see Romans 3:1-4; 9:1-5).

**6. The honor of God is enhanced, and His reign established, when His people honor the Messiah whom He sent.**

Newer Covenant texts such as Matthew 23:39, Acts 3:19-21, and Romans 11:12, 15, imply that Israel’s acceptance of Yeshua will inaugurate the Kingdom, thus establishing and extending God’s reign.. Looking toward that day, we seek to model and advance his honor among our people, Israel.

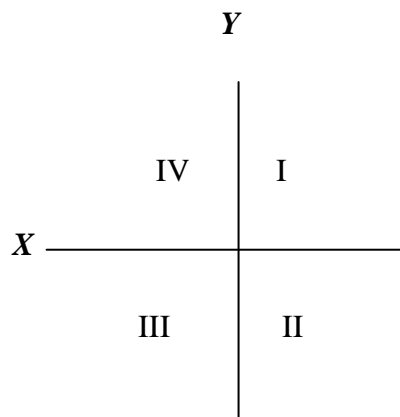
**7. This paradigm enables concerned Christians to be both deeply faithful to Christ and deeply respectful of the living Jewish tradition and the Jewish community.**

Paul Himself exemplified this respect when, toward the end of his life, standing before Herod Agrippa, he characterized Jewish piety in this manner: “they earnestly serve God night and day”(Acts 26:7). Sadly, this respect has not generally characterized standard Christian approaches to the Jewish people. Isn’t it about time that it did?

Of these seven elements, all but the seventh are directly applicable to Messianic Jewish engagement with the wider Jewish world.

### **Contrasting the TEMJP With TSJMP**

The following diagram serves to compare four modes of Messianic Jewish engagement with the wider Jewish community along two axes of measurement. Let the Y axis represent the level of commonality and engagement with the wider Jewish community in areas of communal life and covenant faithfulness. Let the X axis indicate the level of explicit inner mission involving perceiving and presenting Yeshua as central to Jewish communal life and covenant faithfulness, in the context of TEMJCN and TEMJK.



**Figure 1 - Quadrants of Messianic Jewish Engagement With the Wider Jewish Community**

The following table briefly comments on each of these quadrants, outlining how they are regarded by proponents of TEMJP and TSJMP, and suggesting leadership tasks for those advocating TEMJP.

Some terms used in this chart warrant definition. For the purposes of this discussion, “The Emerging Messianic Jewish Canonical Narrative” (TEMJCN) is the story of God’s redemptive dealings with Israel and the nations, as grounded in Scripture, and as understood from a Messianic Jewish communal perspective reflected in TEMJP. It is the story Scripture tells, as seen from our perspective, in anticipation of how we expect the story to turn out. The Emerging Messianic Jewish Kerygma (TEMJK) is the essential story we have to tell the wider Jewish world of who Yeshua is, what He has done, and what that means, and what response it calls for, all in harmony with TEMJCN and the emerging Messianic Jewish paradigm TEMJP.

QUADRANT	LABEL	Benefits according to TEMJP	Dangers According to TEMJP	Leadership Tasks for TEMJP	Benefits according to TSJMP	Dangers according to TSJMP
I - High engagement with Jewish covenantal life and community, high inner mission and kerygmatic proclamation reflecting the Messianic Jewish Canonical Narrative.	Optimal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positions Messianic Jews and our communities where TEMJP views optimal and theologically sound, fostering maximized Messianic Jewish communal honoring of God in the context of Torah faithfulness, and maximized engagement with the wider</li> </ul>	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain high levels of engagement with Jewish communal and covenantal life but in relevant manner rather than settling for stereotypical, lifeless, or anachronistic religious forms in isolation from the wider Jewish world, or vestigial forms of outreach more appropriate to older/other paradigms.</li> <li>• Teach and embody the TEMJCN,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High level of kerygmatic proclamation, “making the gospel known.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too much engagement in Jewish life and community, a likely distraction and seduction.</li> <li>• Erosive of TSJMP’s commitment to free choice in matters of Jewish life and covenant faithfulness.</li> <li>• Competes with TSJMP’s preference of the church as primary community of reference.</li> </ul>

		<p>Jewish community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Theologically, communally, missionally integrated, involving a harmony of TEMJP, TEMJK, and TEMJCN. This contrasts with the dissonance otherwise evident when aspects of older paradigms persist amidst attempts to implement newer ones.</li> <li>• Enables covenantal and missional fidelity in harmony with the TEMJP.</li> </ul>		<p>TEMJK, and skills, knowledge, practices of Jewish life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always keep abreast of changes the wider Jewish world with whom we claim to be engaged, rather than implementing an insular imitation Judaism of our own.</li> </ul>		
<p>II - Low engagement with Jewish covenantal life and community, high level of inner mission and kerygmatic proclamation</p>	<p>Hebrew-Christian ; Extractivist; Culturally and religiously eclectic; Diffuse; Assimilationist</p>	<p>Like Paul, we rejoice that Messiah is preached, by whatever means. But see next column.</p>	<p>Even the kerygma and canonical narrative are deficient in this quadrant because neither supportiv</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through communal modeling, teaching and persuasion, to seek to win as many adherents of this quadrant as possible to Jewish community and covenant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Protects” people from being distracted and seduced by Jewish lifestyle matters; succumbing to “legalism.”</li> <li>• Advances</li> </ul>	<p>Few, if any, as long as one avoids becoming anti-Semitic or totally forgetful of one’s Jewish roots.</p>



	tionist		e and reflective of Jewish covenantal responsibilities nor reflective of the fullness of Yeshua's identity and mission of restoring Israel in covenant faithfulness (cf. Isa 49:6; Eze 37:24-38).	faithfulness for the honor of the God of Israel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep Jewish life vital among us so as to avoid being absorbed into this quadrant.</li> </ul>	the proclamation of the gospel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protects principle of individual choice in matters of Jewish life and covenant faithfulness, thus legitimizing assimilation for who prefer and/or defend it.</li> </ul>	
III - Low engagement w/Jewish covenantal life and community, low inner mission and kerygma	Nominal	No advantages	This is a real danger, especially intergenerationally, when our children and younger people attracted to our movement have not experienced the level of fervor and spiritual vitality that	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We must not confuse full seats with full hearts but must be aware of the true condition of our family members and congregations and seek to model and engender in all real vitality on both axes of measurement.</li> <li>• We must avoid meaningless “going through the motions” and mindless replications of formerly meaningful behaviors—</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None, except on an “I told you so” basis;</li> <li>• Might be useful for motivating the mailing list, by pointing this out as an example of what the Jewish mission seeks to correct and prevent, and the “dangers” of rival forms of Messianic Jewish engagement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calls into question the salvation of all covered by the category.</li> </ul>

			<p>characterized the Messianic Jewish Movement in the 1960's and 1970's.</p>	<p>there must be kavanna [focus and intensity] amidst our keva [received traditional ways of thinking and doing].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We must be open to new ways to express older realities.</li> </ul>		
<p>IV - High level of engagement with Jewish community and covenant, low level of TEMJK and TEMJCN. narrative.</p>	<p>Assimilationist</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TEMJP values and supports Jewish community and covenant faithfulness even in the absence of Yeshua faith because this too honors God. Therefore, we do not limit our support and engagement with Jewish people to those who welcome our message, but seek to engage and cooperate with all efforts toward Jewish covenant faithfulness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As implied in TEMJP, the honor of God and the spread of and His kingdom marred when people do not honor the Messiah whom He sent. Therefore this lack of or retreat from TEMJK and TEMJCN is to be lamented and remedied in all appropriate ways.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remedy the low level of TEMJKP and TEMJCN through teaching, communal embodiment, etc.</li> <li>• Embody and advance lively Yeshua-faith in our individual, familial and communal lives.</li> <li>• Be on the alert for those straying or flagging in Yeshua-faith and seek to bring them back.</li> </ul>	<p>None, except as an "I told you so" for the mailing list (see next column).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is the assumed inevitable outcome of "fraternizing with the enemy," and being "seduced by the rabbis," which some in the Jewish missions community warn against (which warning is, in my view, often politically motivated and grossly overstated).</li> </ul>

As I constructed this table, I became aware of a hidden variable implied by my mandate in writing this paper, but not made explicit. It is a factor we cannot ignore and which must be made explicit both in understanding and in strategic action. To fail to effectively do so will certainly undermine any programs or actions we undertake. This hidden variable is the matter of our “intra-mission.”

While Mark Kinzer’s superb book masterfully outlines our inner mission, to the wider Jewish community, and our outer mission, to the Christian church, it fails to name or discuss our intra mission, that is, our mission to the wider Messianic Jewish world of which we are a part. If we fail to rightly discern or address what kind of engagement with the wider Messianic Jewish world is required of us as proponents of TEMJP, we may vitiate, sabotage, and abort our efforts at their very inception.

I have made a beginning in discussing our intra mission in the chart we have been discussing. I would briefly summarize and expand that beginning as follows.

1. We must always be seeking to advance our own movement along the lines of TEMJP, by which I mean, we need to be skillful and persuasive in attracting and bringing winnable Messianic Jewish adherents to our perspective because we believe our perspective to be right, God-honoring and God-given, and because we believe this to be our divine responsibility,
2. We must be aware of and defended against attacks upon us, direct and covert, from those championing other paradigms and/or simply opposed to our own. We must not only be harmless as doves, but also wise as serpents.
3. We must beware of becoming needlessly combative. In this, we might take the Apostle Paul and our Messiah Yeshua as our models. In Philippians Paul

rejoices that Messiah is being preached even by those who seek to annoy him by the way they preach Him. We should do the same. And as 1 Peter reminds us of Yeshua, “When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he trusted him who judges justly” (1 Peter 2:23).

4. We must vigilantly monitor and nurture our own spiritual vitality as well as that of our families and our congregations along both axes of measurement postulated here—that of engagement with Jewish community/covenant fidelity, and that of a Messianic Jewish canonical narrative and kerygma. Both Jewish life and the gospel must manifestly live among us in the power of the Spirit, or all is lost. We must remain vigilant against the tendency to go through the motions, and mistake behaviors associated with spiritual vitality for the spiritual vitality they are meant to embody. In Jewish terms, we must avoid settling for keva, even Messianic Jewish keva, in the absence of kavanna.
5. We need to combat any tendency toward isolationism either from the wider Jewish world, or the Christian church. If we claim to be that living link in the midst of Jewish community, whereby the church from among the nations joins the Commonwealth of Israel, we must be actually and livingly rather than just notionally and theoretically engaged both with Jewish communal life and the entire church as it is. Some Messianic Jews have no relationship with the Jewish world apart from their engagement with Messianic Jewish congregations, and no relationship with the Christian church except for some safe and strongly bounded subset of that Church deemed theologically “safe” or doctrinally pure. If we are to be who TEMJP requires us to be, we must become more courageous and

forthright in our relationship with the wider Jewish and more ecumenical in our relationship with the entire church. This will call for some real intra mission maturation. TEMJP calls us to holy responsibilities and authentic relationship with the Jewish world and the Christian church. Integrity demands that we embrace these responsibilities with courage and humility.

### **Redefining Messianic Jewish Engagement With the Wider Jewish World as Remnant Responsibilities**

In this section of this paper, I turn from our intra mission back to what Kinzer calls our inner mission to the wider Jewish world. I will be examining the metaphor of being “the Remnant of Israel” as a helpful anchor and window for understanding the responsibilities inherent in our inner mission, as a means of clarifying this mandate, and of enabling us to define and defend this mandate to ourselves and others.

At the 2004 Delegates Meeting of the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations held in Boston, one delegate remarked on “living in wonderful times when prophecy is being fulfilled and our people are returning to the Land.”

Such rhetoric is common in our movement. But I fear that despite how Scripture pertaining to the return to the Land is bandied about in our circles, many fail to pay sufficient attention to the wider context of these references. These contexts frequently also speak of the return being accompanied by a supernatural Jewish return to covenant faithfulness—a return of our people to honoring God though embracing a life ordered by Torah.

Although most agree that our people will “return to the Lord” in the latter days, we have forgotten to ask “What shape will this return take?” And Scripture is clear: that return will be evidenced in a return to Torah-based covenant faithfulness.

What I am suggesting here is a paradigm shift: a fundamental change in viewpoint that generates new questions and new answers, resulting in the expiration of formerly prevailing paradigms. This paradigm shift includes fundamental changes in perspective in what we mean by effective outreach.

Among these expiring paradigms is that which conceives of outreach as primarily a matter of making the sale, or closing the deal. In our evangelicalized culture, we are too wedded to a sales model of outreach. We make our pitch to the person we are “witnessing” to, who is called a “contact.” We know we have succeeded in our witness when the “contact” prays to “accept Messiah as their personal savior.” Forgive me, but this sounds too much like a person signing on the dotted line.

Another inadequate concept of outreach sees it primarily in terms of increasing the size of our congregational population. Outreach then becomes not so much a matter of sales, as a matter of advertising. This model is similar to various communications approaches to “witnessing.” Here again, the emphasis is on numbers, on statistics, on the bottom line.

Confrontational approaches are hardly more satisfactory. These seem to vitiate the very nature of the kingdom message, robbing it of its relational spirit. Such approaches are overly message-centered while treating respectful and real relationships as secondary or purely utilitarian. I remember a woman telling me that she could always expect a phone call from “her missionary” on Thursday night, because Friday was the day when

statistical reports had to be handed in to mission officials. This kind of utilitarian approach, which cares about the message, while treating the recipients as a means to other ends, is far from satisfactory. We recognize that this kind of approach does violence to the deeply relational nature of the God who is altogether good and His good news. This too is an approach that is expiring, and deservedly so.

All of these approaches are inadequate because they are products of our Western marketing mentality—they are not transcendent but limited cultural artifacts. Instead, we ought to motivate and structure our outreach around honoring and glorifying God, a theme strongly attested and demonstrated in Scripture, including texts referring explicitly to the end-time renewal of Israel and the exaltation of Messiah, as, for example, Ezekiel 36-39, chapter which couch the renewal of Israel under the reign of the Messiah in terms of reversing the profanation of God's name through the manifestation of his honor and sanctification or vindication of His name. This being the case, outreach must be seen primarily as a matter of honoring God and the Messiah whom he sent.

What then am I proposing? What is a better paradigm for effective Messianic Jewish outreach? And equally to the point, what kind of paradigm can we find that does greater justice to Scripture's foundations for an understanding of a Messianic Jewish outreach that duly honors the God of Israel and the Israel of God?

I am proposing that at the very least we need a new definition such as this one: Messianic Jewish outreach is the remnant of Israel being what it should be, and doing what it should do with respect to God's consummating purposes for the descendants of Jacob.

We are used to thinking of ourselves as the remnant of Israel. However, I wonder how many of us have given attention to the responsibilities of the remnant? Those responsibilities include at least the following.

(1) The remnant is meant to serve as a sign that God has a continuing purpose for the Jewish people.

(2) The remnant is meant to be a demonstration of that purpose - a proleptic preview, a sort of "preview of coming attractions.

(3) The remnant is meant to be a catalyst assisting greater Israel toward that Divine purpose.<sup>1</sup>

If effective Messianic Jewish outreach is ineluctably rooted in God's consummating purposes for the descendants of Jacob, then, if we would be effective in outreach, our first order of business is to root out and attend to the God-given cues, especially in Scripture, of this ultimate purpose. How else can we be a sign of that purpose, a demonstration of that purpose, and a catalyst toward that purpose if we don't know what it is?

What does Scripture say about God's consummating purpose for the descendants of Jacob?

Repeatedly and often Scripture portrays God's ultimate purpose for Israel in terms of a national return to covenant faithfulness as manifest in Torah obedience. And often, this return to covenant faithfulness is linked to the return of our people to the Land. Of many passages supporting this contention, one example is the thirtieth chapter of

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<sup>1</sup> This understanding of remnant responsibilities is grounded in an article by Dan G. Johnson, "The Structure and Meaning of Romans 11." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 46(1):91-103.



Deuteronomy. Notice the repeated linkage of return to the Lord, return to the Land, and return to the Law, that is, Torah obedience.

30:1 Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you, 2 and you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, 3 that the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you. . . 6 And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. . . . 8 And you will again obey the voice of the LORD and do all His commandments which I command you today. 9 The LORD your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand. . . 10 if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, and if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Another example is the very familiar and central Messianic Jewish text, Jeremiah 31:31 ff., where again, renewal of the people is expressed in a return to Torah obedience. But perhaps the strongest prophetic text on this end-time return to the Lord, to the Land, and to the Law, is found in Ezekiel 36, beginning at verse 24. This text reads like a checklist that we need to ratify in all aspects if we would be true to God's intent.

Ezekiel 36:24 "For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land." (Regathering: All Messianic Jews are prepared to say "Amen" to this: Hallelujah, we believe in the regathering of our people to the Land). 36:25 "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols." (Renewal: We are all prepared to say "Amen" to this national spiritual renewal as well). 36:26 "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh

and give you a heart of flesh.” (We say “Hallelujah” to this as well: national regeneration. . .a new heart of stone instead of a heart of flesh). But then things get “difficult”—at least for some in the UMJC wedded to old and expiring paradigms. Read on.

36:27 “I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.” Here is where proponents TSJMP apply the brakes. Nevertheless, this text makes clear an organic connection between this return to the Lord, this return to the Land, and a return to the commandments God gave to our people. This is all signed, sealed, and delivered through an “inclusio,” a verse ending this section which echoes what was said at the beginning of the section: “Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God” (36:28).

Nothing could be clearer: return to the Lord, return to the Land and return to the Law of God are all joined in Scripture. (And yes, I am well aware that it is reductionist to refer to the commandments, statutes and ordinances of Scripture, and to Torah in general as “Law.” But let’s face it, it makes for good alliteration).

In the Newer Testament, Romans 11 further explores aspects of this consummating purpose for the descendants of Jacob. Romans 9-11 ends in a doxology of astonishment. Paul is awestruck and astonished at the surprising outworking of God’s consummating purposes. Who would have guessed that the people of Israel would, in the main, turn down their Messiah when God sent Him? And who would have guessed that the nations of the world would come to a living relationship with the God of Israel without having to become Jews first? And who would have guessed that at the end of history, God would bring the Jewish people back to Himself in covenant faithfulness

through this same Messiah—with the Jews returning to God in the context of Jewish life, in the power of the Spirit, and through the very same Messiah through whom the Nations of the world turned to this same God—while not having been required to embrace Jewish life? How astounding! How miraculous! How unexpected and uniquely the work of God!

Is it not clear that this is what is astonishing the Apostle? Or do we imagine that the best God can pull off at the end of history, when “all Israel will be saved,” is that massive numbers of Jews will become Baptists, Pentecostals, or Presbyterians?

To just ask the question is to answer it.

We must remember that in Romans 11, Paul is contrasting Israel and the nations as aggregates. He is not speaking of Gentile and Jewish individuals, but of these respective groups, the same dyad as is found throughout the Older Testament: Israel and the nations.

God’s final act toward the Jews will be directed to us as a people—he will bring the Jewish people to covenant faithfulness to Himself through the one despised by the nation [Isaiah 49; Zech 12; Isaiah 53].

Therefore, as part of the remnant of Israel, and within the context of TEMJP, TEMJCN, and TEMJK, our outreach responsibility includes the following neglected factors:

1. Our outreach is only accomplished as we serve as a sign that God has a continuing purpose for the Jews, a consummating purpose of a national turning to renewed covenant faithfulness in obedience to Torah in the power of the Spirit through Yeshua the Messiah.

2. Our outreach is only accomplished as we demonstrate communally that we are a demonstration of that purpose - an anticipation, a preview of that covenant faithfulness which will one day be true of all Israel: a return to Torah-living in the power of the Holy Spirit, and to the honor of Yeshua the Messiah.

3. Our outreach is only accomplished as we become agents of revealing Messiah's glory and promoting his honor in the midst of Israel, catalyzing and assisting Israel toward these ends in the context of this Torah obedience: "My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall follow my ordinances and be careful to observe my statutes" (Eze 37:34).

If this analysis of Scripture is true, what would be the results for how we pursue outreach?

First, outreach would no longer be adversarial and confrontational. We would commend all religious Jewish efforts toward Torah-based covenant faithfulness. For example, when religious Jews come to our conferences to oppose what we stand for, we would commend them for their attempt to honor God in the context of Torah obedience, while still differing with them in their disparagement of faith in Yeshua. In our communities, we would seek to assist and applaud all efforts by religious Jews to honor God in the context of Torah. We would not feel obliged to adopt some sort of adversarial posture.

Second, we ourselves would form communities committed to this kind of Torah-based covenant faithfulness, for we could not be faithful to our remnant responsibility unless we served as a sign, demonstration and catalyst of this kind of faithfulness with respect to God's consummating purpose for all Israel. But our Torah faithfulness would

be unique to ourselves in some ways due to the impact of Yeshua and the Emissaries on our halacha, our honoring of Yeshua, and our experience of the Spirit.

Third, our mission to the wider religious Jewish world would be to advocate faith in Yeshua and the power of the Spirit as Divine means toward their own greater covenant faithfulness. This moves outreach beyond simply individual soul salvation and aligns it better with the reversal of profanation and sanctification of God's Name highlighted by Ezekiel. In advocating a renewal of Jewish covenant faithfulness, through Yeshua-faitah and in the power of the Spirit, we would be seeking to take the wider Jewish religious world further in the direction in which they are already heading, rather than intercepting them and offering what we deem a preferable alternative, as is common in TSJMP.

Fourth, in addition to affirming and yet further catalyzing and challenging religious Jews, our ministry to secularized Jews would be very strong: a call back to the God of our ancestors and the ways of our ancestors, and a call back to Jewish community through Yeshua the Messiah in the power of the Spirit.

Fifth, the support of church people for our efforts would involve their applauding us for being fully Jewish rather than wooing us to be more like themselves. They would realize that moving deeper into Jewish life is our Divine destiny and our remnant responsibility.

Sixth, we would be returning to a communal concept of outreach rather than an individualistic one. Our congregations would focus on becoming communities dedicated to restoring the honor of God, honoring and sanctifying His Holy Name in the sight of the nations, in the context of Torah-obedience (covenant faithfulness), Yeshua-faith, and the power of the Spirit. In view of what Scripture says, how could it be otherwise?

All of this is crucially important for a number of reasons:

(1) It is important because it better aligns Messianic Jewish outreach with the revealed purposes of God for the Jewish people and the foundational concerns of sanctifying His Name in the midst of the earth.

(2) It is important because it is an antidote to culturally determined and limited sales-oriented approaches to the task.

(3) It is important because it instantly neutralizes the adversarial posture that we have inherited from generations past, which is perpetuated in TSJMP, and which ill-serves the greater purposes of God.

(4) It is important because it calls us to a return to God-honoring Jewish covenant faithfulness.

(5) It is important because it challenges us to expand and reevaluate the role of the Holy Spirit's presence in our congregations and our Union. And finally,

(6) it is important because it addresses the biggest problem, the biggest obstacle, in Messianic Jewish outreach.

The biggest obstacle in Messianic Jewish outreach is the widespread assimilation of Jewish believers. The Jewish community has a right to assume that when the Messiah comes, he will make Jewish people better Jews. When the perceived effect of the faith in Yeshua is that Yeshua-believers become assimilated and indifferent to Jewish life and community, the Jewish community has a right to say: "Don't be ridiculous! Put your Bibles away and don't waste your time trying to convince us! How could this Yeshua be the Messiah if he makes Jews into goyim?" This objection has all the truth in the world behind it, and is Scripturally irrefutable. But our own return to Jewish covenant

faithfulness, which is the will of G-d for the remnant and for all Israel, has the added benefit of making this objection null and void.

Is God's final act in history going to involve making millions of Jews into Baptists or does Scripture rather affirm that God is going to trigger a massive return of His people to Him in Jewish covenantal faithfulness, where he will write the Torah of Moses on their hearts, through Yeshua the Messiah and in the power of the Spirit?

Surely, the recently read Torah and Haftarah readings for Parashat Vayigash (Gen 44:18-47:27; Eze 37:15-28), in which Joseph reveals his identity to his brothers, and which the end time renewal of Israel in the context of Torah obedience and allegiance to Messiah could not be more pertinent here and could not be more confirmatory of TEMJP and its conviction that our task is to reveal, and thus honor, Yeshua who is already present amidst Israel "just as Joseph provided for his brothers who rejected him even before he revealed his identity to them", and to our the paradigms conviction that "the honor of God is enhanced, and His right established, when His people honor the Messiah whom He sent." Indeed!

### **Other Implications of the Remnant Metaphor: God's Remnant Strategy**

In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, the author speaks not simply of Biblical characters, but of Jewish heroes of faithfulness to the God of Israel. He moves beyond speaking of individuals to generalizing about those who exemplified suffering faithfulness:

*35 Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection.*

*36Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. 37They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented-- 38of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.*

*39 Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, 40since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect.*

The author of the letter explicitly contradicts one of the most common assumptions of SJMP—that spiritual inheritance in Messiah only comes to those Jews who have explicit knowledge of and faith in Yeshua.

On the contrary, the author states that the purity of the faith of Jews who suffered mightily for the God of Israel is sufficient to make these named and unnamed heroes eventual beneficiaries of the work of the Messiah whom they did not know, but whom they faithfully served and awaited nonetheless. Furthermore, the text says that it was the purpose of God, that as we of Israel who DO believe in Yeshua enter into our greater fullness of inheritance through our knowledge of Messiah and our explicit faith in Him, our blessedness washes back over the faithful of Israel with whom we are in solidarity. The letter clearly says that they too become beneficiaries of the greater inheritance we have received. Indeed it was the purpose of God that this be so.

Contrary to the post-Justin Martyr worldview we have inherited, which postulates that Jews who do not believe in Jesus have no faith, the Letter to the Hebrews extols Jewish faith and faithfulness, even among those ignorant of the Messiah who came.

F.F. Bruce expressed it this way, in his commentary on the Letter to the Hebrews.

*They lived and died in prospect of a fulfillment which none of them experienced on earth; yet so real was that fulfillment to them that it gave*



*them power to press upstream, against the current of the environment, and to live on earth as citizens of that commonwealth whose foundations are firmly laid in the unseen and eternal order. Their record is on high, and on earth as well. . .*

*But now the promise has been fulfilled; the age of the new covenant has dawned; the Christ to whose day they looked forward has come and by his self-offering and his high-priestly ministry in the presence of God he has procured perfection for them—and for us. ‘With this in mind, God had made a better plan, that only in company with us should they reach their perfection’ (NEB). They and we now enjoy unrestricted access to God through Christ, as fellow-citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem. The ‘better plan’ which God had made embraces the better hope, the better promises, the better covenant, the better sacrifices, the better and abiding possession, and the better resurrection which is their heritage, and ours.”<sup>2</sup>*

Andrew Walls, Director of the Scottish Institute of Missionary Studies at the University of Aberdeen speaks helpfully about this chapter, when he says

The significance of Abraham’s faith, and the promised reward of that faith, were not clear in Abraham’s lifetime. They were not even made clear in the incarnation, when God “spoke” by a Son. They were delayed until they could be shared with “us.” By “us” the writer means, of course, that miscellaneous group of early believers in Christ, . . . to whom he was writing. They were tied into Abraham’s story and Abraham into theirs. *Abraham was waiting for them.*

Christian [and Messianic Jewish!] faith, therefore, is necessarily ancestor conscious, aware of the previous generations of faith. It cannot divinize the ancestors, however, for their continuing significance comes only from God’s activity in and towards them. The work of salvation is cross-generational, and never complete in one generation. And the generations—two millennia of them since the incarnation—are parts of a single body, and that body needs them all.<sup>3</sup>

Walls can be forgiven if he misses the fact that the redeemed community predates the incarnation, and that we Jews are one body with all Israel, that our roots must run

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<sup>2</sup> Bruce, F.F. The Epistle to the Hebrews. (Revised Edition). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990:330, emphasis added).

<sup>3</sup> Walls, Andrew F. “The Ephesian Moment: At the Crossroads in Christian History.” In Walls, Andrew F. The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002:73, 75.

through Sinai to get to Abraham. But what I want to commend and highlight in Walls' material is what he sees in common with F. F. Bruce and the author of Hebrews: the unity and common inheritance we Messianic Jewish Yeshua believers share with other faithful Jews who suffered for their loyalty to the God of Israel but lacked explicit Yeshua faith.

In discussing this with one member of the Dayeinu branch of the UMJC, in response to my direct question in this regard, he averred that Jews were better off before the coming of Messiah because they had a share in redemption even apart from explicit faith in Yeshua. In other words, it was easier for them to get into or stay within the company of the redeemed.

I suggest that this is in error. As Mark Kinzer once said to me privately, he believes that with the coming of Yeshua, the condition of the Jewish people had to be advanced, not set back. I believe he is right, and I believe that part of God's remnant strategy is that the blessings which adhere to the Yeshua-believing remnant wash over others within faithful Israel. And I believe I have clearly demonstrated that the author of the Letter to the Hebrews believed so too.

At the very least, God's remnant strategy works forward and backward through time—the blessings we inherit through Yeshua faith become the legacy of faithful ones of our people who went before us, and who come after us. This is clear.

Paul uses a similar argument through two metaphors in Romans 11:16, saying *16If the part of the dough offered as first fruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; and if the root is holy, then the branches also are holy.* It is the Yeshua-believing Remnant of Israel that is the part of the dough offered as first fruits, and the root of the branches of

Israel. Paul's argument, like that of the Letter to the Hebrews, is that the status of the Remnant washes over the rest of Israel, but here the extended benefit is not only temporal but in some sense communal. Paul says that what becomes true of the remnant in some measure brings benefit to the rest of Israel.

We do not know nor can we know the full extent of this shared blessedness—how widely it spreads, and what it entails. But we can know this: that as we are faithful to our outreach responsibilities, to our inner mission to Israel, and as we increase the size and depth of the remnant, we are agents of spreading more blessing to Israel than we know or can see. This too is clear.

With all of the foregoing in mind, then, can we not agree that it is it certainly about time for us to dedicate ourselves, and to lead those who follow us into rededicating themselves, to the task of embodying and advancing TEMJP, the Emerging Messianic Jewish Paradigm, and to fulfilling the full orb of our remnant responsibilities to be a sign, demonstration and catalyst of God's consummating purposes for our people Israel? The future demands it, the past points toward it, and the present awaits it.

If not us, who? And if not now, when?