TIKKUN AMERICA

restore

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TAKE YOUR PLACE IN HISTORY

Foundations of the Foundation

REDEEMED BY A REDEEMER

Difficult Lessons from Job's Story, Part 3

CROSSING BOUNDARIES

New Horizons of our Messianic Call

JEWISH PRAYER TRADITIONS AND MESSIANIC JEWISH CONGREGSTIONS

Worship with Passion and the Manifest Presence of God

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BENJAMIN JUSTER

WHEN PREFERENCE IS **PRIORITY**



I prefer coffee over tea. I would rather live in a warm climate than a cold one. I like dark chocolate over milk chocolate, and I remain unconvinced that white chocolate is chocolate. Give me an expertly grilled steak over chicken, and asparagus instead of green beans. Life is full of such preferences.

Our preferences follow us into congregational life. I enjoy worship that is intimate and unplugged. I generally prefer a thirty-minute sermon to an hour-long exposition. Someone sitting beside me may feel exactly the opposite. We can both love the Lord deeply and have very different ideas about a wonderful service.

In Messianic congregations, the possibilities multiply. Some want more liturgy; others want less. Some desire more Hebrew, while others struggle to follow what is already included. One person longs for a weekly Torah service. Another wants more explicit mention of Yeshua. Still another wonders why so many songs are in a minor key.

And, of course, no leader has ever discovered a room temperature that satisfies everyone!

After several decades of serving in various ministry capacities, I have noticed how easily preferences become priorities. Something we enjoy gradually becomes something we expect. Eventually, we may treat it as something we must have in order to remain connected.

This can leave us unsettled and dissatisfied, even in a community where God is working. We begin noticing everything that falls short of our expectations. Conversations take on a critical tone. Subtle undercurrents of division develop. Sometimes wonderful people walk away from meaningful relationships because the community does not consistently meet their preferences.

There is nothing wrong with enjoying certain expressions of worship or thoughtfully communicating what helps us engage. Leaders benefit from hearing the needs of those they serve. The question is whether our preferences have become the standard by which we judge the whole community.

I believe spiritual maturity becomes evident when we grow more concerned about helping those around us connect with God. We begin asking, “How might this serve someone else?” That question can change our experience of an entire service.

A song we would never choose may help another person express love for the Lord. A liturgical prayer may give someone language for grief or gratitude. An extended time of teaching may bring clarity to a person wrestling with Scripture. When we notice what God is doing in others, we discover reasons to rejoice beyond our own enjoyment.



Paul writes, *"Be tenderly devoted to one another in brotherly love; outdo one another in giving honor"* (Romans 12:10, TLV). Other translations express this as "preferring one another." What a beautiful redirection of our hearts! We can use our energy to honor people, making room for their needs and celebrating their growth.

Philippians 2:3–5 brings this into focus: *"Do nothing out of selfishness or conceit, but with humility consider others as more important than yourselves, looking out not only for your own interests but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves, which also was in Messiah Yeshua"* (TLV).

Notice that Paul includes our own interests. We have needs, and those needs matter. Yet love widens our attention to include the people beside us. First Corinthians 10:24 states it plainly: *"Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor"* (TLV).

Yeshua gives us a powerful picture of this in John 13. The One worthy of all honor rises from the meal, takes a towel, and washes His disciples' feet. He stoops before the very people who should have been serving Him.

Imagine being in that room. Dusty feet. A basin of water. The hands of the Master doing the work of a servant. His greatness is expressed through love willing to stoop. He then calls His disciples to follow His example.





That invitation reaches into our congregational life. We may never pick up a literal basin, but opportunities to serve surround us. We can welcome a newcomer, encourage a weary worship leader, or participate wholeheartedly in a service we would have planned differently. Each response gives honor to someone else.

This requires discernment. Preferences about style differ from concerns involving biblical faithfulness, integrity, or harmful conduct. Those concerns deserve honest attention. Yet when the issue is simply that something is not how we like it, the Lord may be inviting us to grow in love.

Here are three ways we can respond:

1. Identify one preference you have elevated into a requirement. Ask the Lord to show you where disappointment has become criticism. Before the next service, pray, "Yeshua, help me receive what You are doing here and see whom You are blessing." Enter with an expectant heart.

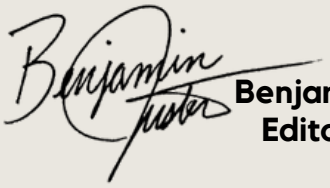
2. Intentionally honor someone whose preferences differ from yours. Ask what helps that person connect with God. Listen with curiosity. Encourage their participation, and thank those who serve the community. Understanding another person's heart often softens our insistence on having things our way.



3. Choose one act of service each week. Welcome someone, pray with a person who needs encouragement, or help with a practical task. If you have feedback, share it humbly with the appropriate leader. Let your contribution strengthen the relationships God has entrusted to you.

As we practice these things, we can learn to rest even when everything is not exactly as we would prefer. We can worship with gratitude, receive with humility, and remain connected through ordinary disappointments. There is real freedom in that kind of maturity. We may be surprised to find that a service we once would have dismissed becomes a place of encounter. As our attention turns toward the Lord and His people, our capacity to receive from Him can grow too.

I will probably continue choosing coffee, dark chocolate, and a warm climate. But I want the Lord to keep shaping my heart so that, among His people, love has priority. May we become communities where each person helps another draw near to God, and where honoring one another becomes one of our greatest joys.



Benjamin Juster
Editor in Chief

Preferences about style differ from concerns involving biblical faithfulness, integrity, or harmful conduct.

BENJAMIN JUSTER

TAKE YOUR PLACE IN **HISTORY**

DR. JASON HUBBARD



FOUNDATIONS OF THE FOUNDATION

To what extent do you want to take your place in history in this generation? I want to encourage you to give yourself to unrelenting prayer on behalf of the salvation of Israel and the end-time harvest. Let's consider how God shares His Heart concerning Israel in Isaiah:

"For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch." —Isaiah 62:1 (ESV)

We know today that the promise of Isaiah 62 has not yet been totally fulfilled. We believe the Lord is still commissioning watchmen who will cry out to the Lord in prayer night and day until Jerusalem becomes a praise on the earth!



Throughout all of the previous Foundations of the Foundation articles, many of God's promises concerning Israel have become clear. The Lord is asking us to respond in prayer! When our prayers are shaped by God's written Word, we are building on solid ground. As we pray according to the Word, we are reminding God of His good promises. Promises predict answers by foretelling what to expect!

When we pray according to God's Word, we pray from the answer, and with the answer in mind! When we plead to claim God's promises, we are praying from the answer to the answer! In prayer, we are asking Him what He asks us to ask Him. When we ask according to His will and in His name, He always responds! He releases His power, His love, and His truth on the earth in response to the prayers of His people.

"If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it." —John 14:14 (ESV)

Let's take our place in history by pleading the good promises of God concerning His Heart for Israel in these days.

"Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'I am zealous for Zion with great zeal; with great fervor I am zealous for her.' ... Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Behold, I will save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west; I will bring them back, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. they shall be My people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.'" —Zechariah 8:2, 7–8 (NKJV)

A GIFT OF TEARS

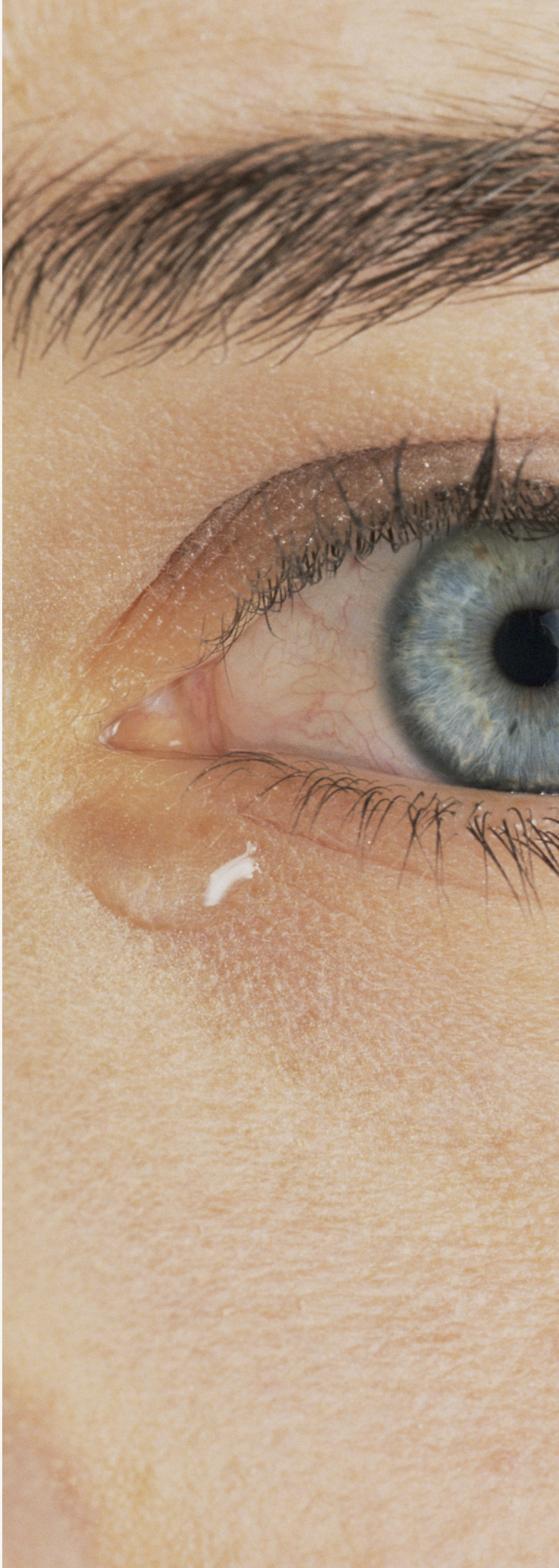
During these last few years, I have been asking the Lord to release a global *"gift of tears"* to the Body of Messiah concerning God's Heart for Israel and the Jewish people worldwide. Just as Yeshua wept loudly over the city of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday as He descended from the Mount of Olives, may we join together with His Heart for His people and the city of Jerusalem:

"As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it." —Luke 19:41

Yeshua loved Israel so much that His Heart grieved over His people, knowing that most of them did not know what truly would have brought them peace. Most of them would miss their day of visitation. Forty years later, the temple would lay desolate, and in 70 AD, approximately one million Jews would die in the Roman siege against this city.

As a Jew, Paul carried Yeshua's Heart for his brothers in Israel:

"I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from [Messiah] for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises.... Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved." —Romans 9:2–4; 10:1 (ESV)





There is nothing casual about prayer in Scripture. True intercession is always love-motivated. Love-motivated prayer is a love-motivated plea to a love-giving God on behalf of love-needy people who live in a love-starved world. May we enter into God's Heart for Israel with love-motivated prayer and "pleas for mercy" on their behalf:

"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn." — Zechariah 12:10 (ESV, bold emphasis added)

We love our Jewish brothers and sisters. As the Lord has had mercy on us as Gentile believers in Yeshua, could we not cry out on their behalf with *"pleas for mercy"*?

Father, we ask that You would release Your mercy upon Your people in Israel until she beholds the one whom she has pierced. Would You send a "piercing" revelation of the "pierced One" to the very Passover Lamb of Glory?

Daniel loved his people and pleaded with mercy in his prayer in Daniel 9:

"Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his ***pleas for mercy****, and for your own sake, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate. O my God, incline your ear and hear.*

Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name." —Daniel 9:17–19 (ESV, bold emphasis added)

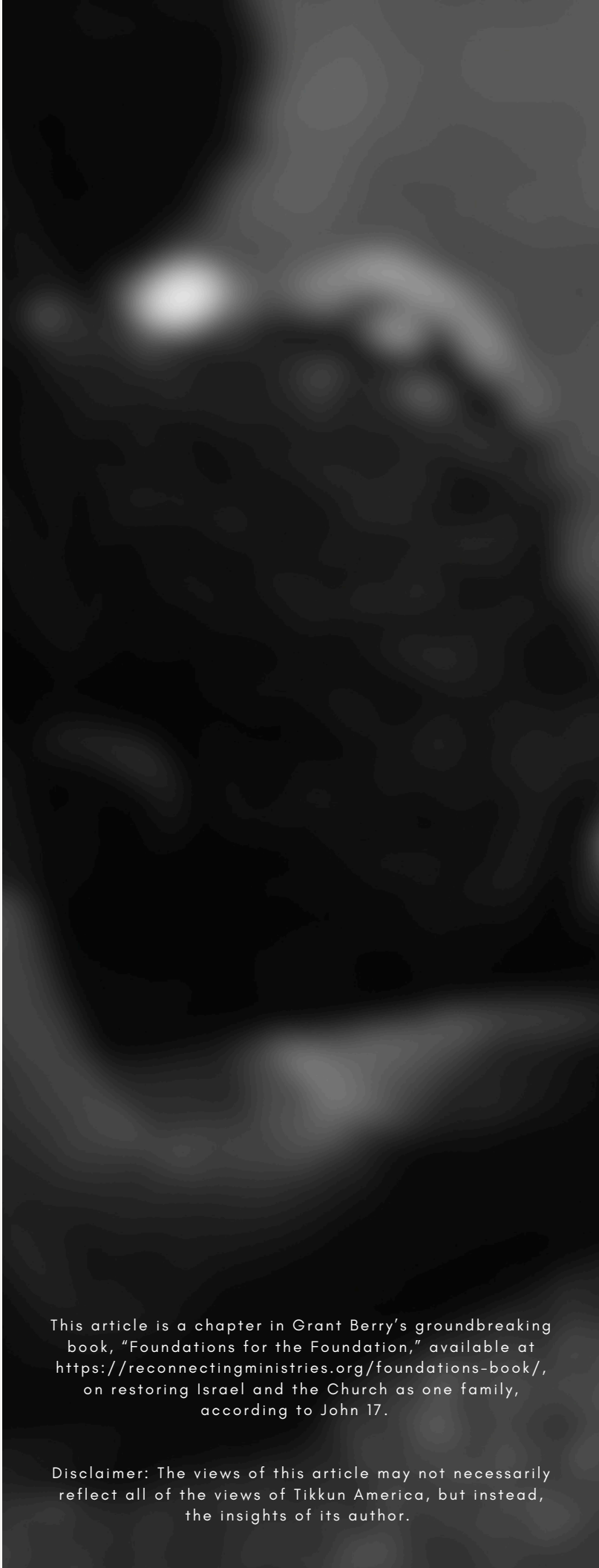
Travailing prayer must precede prevailing prayer. Agonizing, desperate prayer will often lead to prayer with tears. As Charles H. Spurgeon wrote in The Treasury of David, Psalms 126–150, volume 6, "Tears are liquid prayer." May our hearts grow in tender love with tears toward Israel in these days, and for Israel and the Church to be one.

May we "weep" in order to "reap" a harvest of Jewish souls calling on the name of Yeshua Mashiach for salvation in Him alone!

As the psalmist writes:
"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." —Psalm 126:5–6 (KJV)

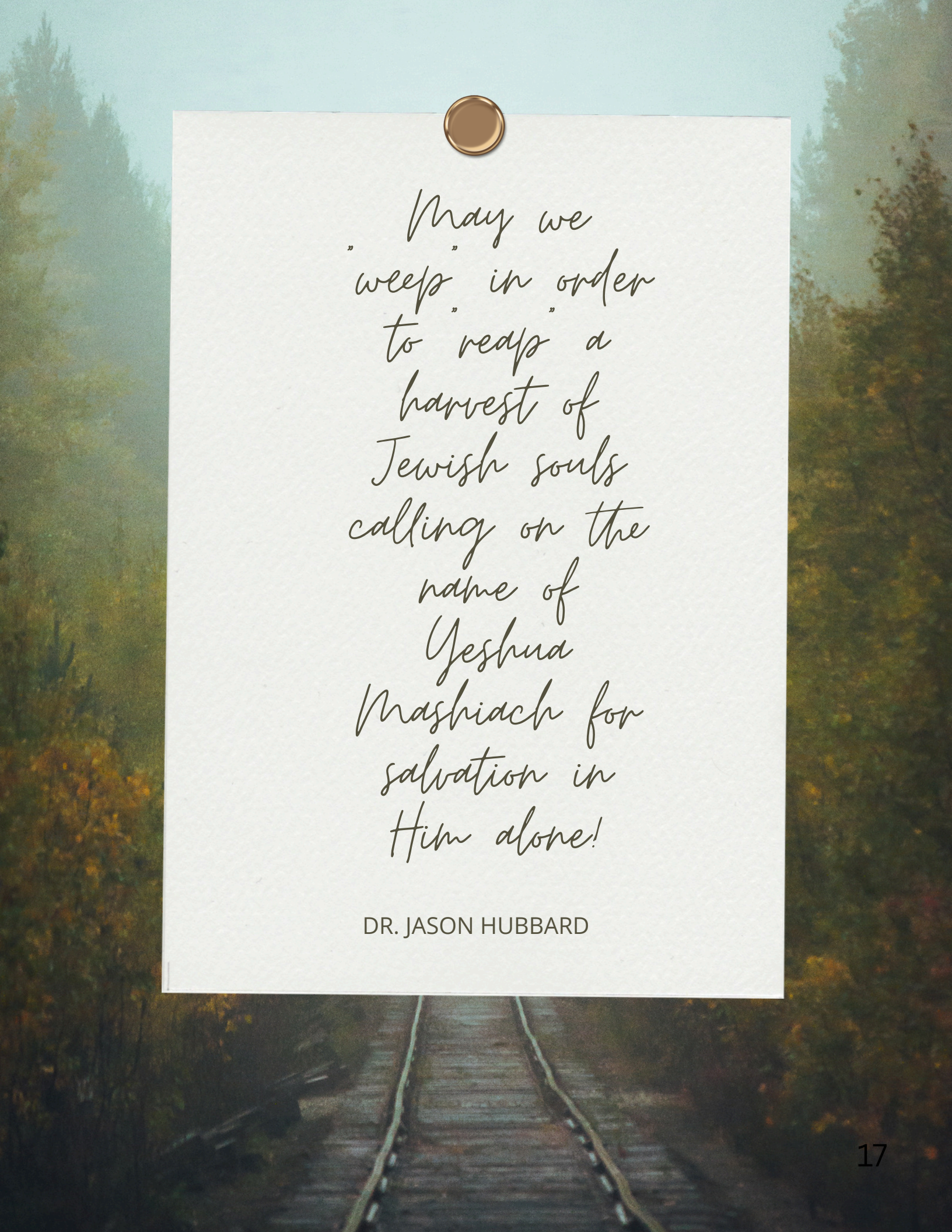
Let's take our place in history as we plead the good promises of God on behalf of Israel and the Nations!

Lord, we ask that You would release a "global gift of tears" on behalf of Israel, the Jewish people worldwide, and the end-time harvest to the Nations so that the Great Commission will be fulfilled.



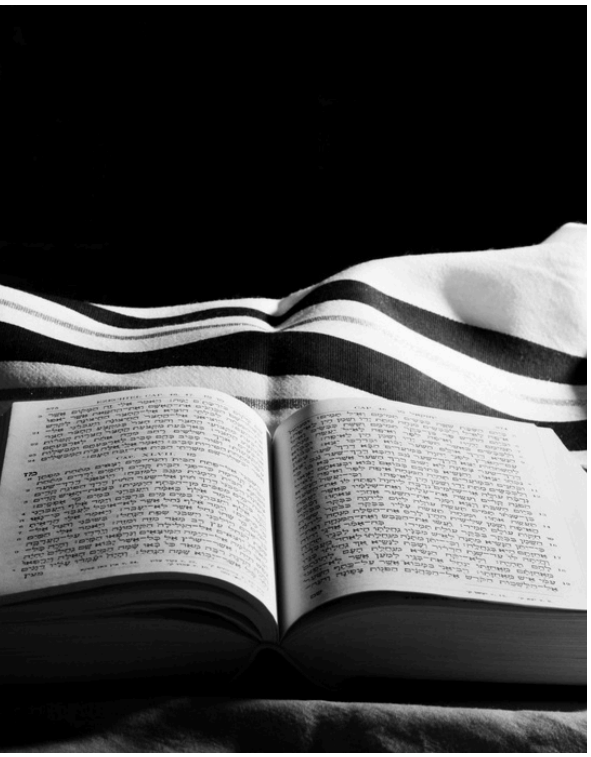
This article is a chapter in Grant Berry's groundbreaking book, "Foundations for the Foundation," available at https://reconnectingministries.org/foundations-book/, on restoring Israel and the Church as one family, according to John 17.

Disclaimer: The views of this article may not necessarily reflect all of the views of Tikkun America, but instead, the insights of its author.



"May we "weep" in order to "reap" a harvest of Jewish souls calling on the name of Yeshua Mashiach for salvation in Him alone!

DR. JASON HUBBARD



Jewish Prayer Tradition and Messianic Jewish Congregations





Worship with Passion and the Manifest Presence of God

DANIEL JUSTER

The founders of the Messianic Jewish congregational movement included traditional Jewish worship material for Shabbat and Congregational worship. (See Phil Goble, Everything you need to Grow a Messianic Synagogue) Later, some in the movement questioned this inclusion, asking, Was this dead liturgy? This led many to question the origins of the liturgy, its content, and its usefulness in worship.

Traditional Jewish Worship is Amazingly Biblical

Those who have not studied it did not realize how the content of much of traditional Jewish worship, and how it is amazingly biblical. Rachmiel Frydland, one of the early fathers in the Messianic Jewish movement, pointed this out in the mid-1970s at a conference I attended.
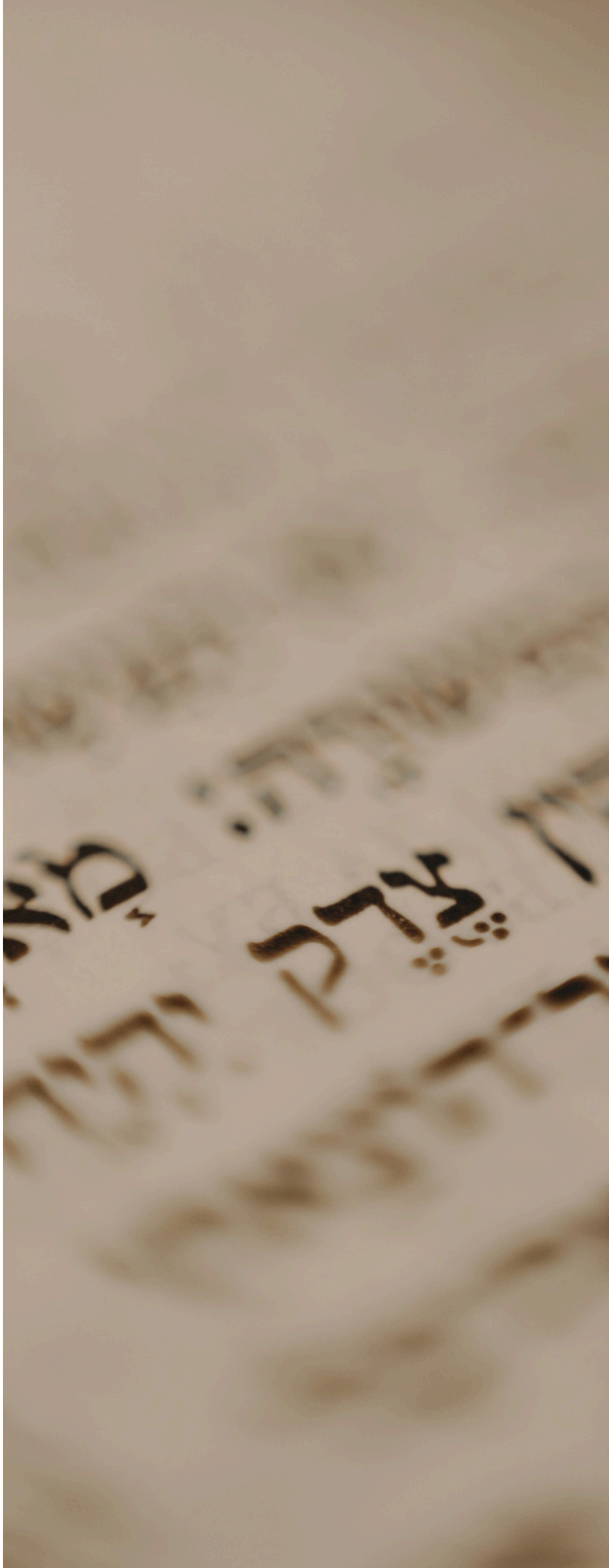
Rachmiel was trained in one of the most famous Yeshivot (Jewish rabbinical schools) in Poland. He escaped the Holocaust in the forests of Poland, then came to faith in Yeshua and became a proclaimer of the Good News of Yeshua to the Jewish people with what today is known as Chosen People Ministries. He asserted that the spirit of the Talmud and the Siddur are different. The one is about the love and mercy of God, really salvation by grace in a pre-Yeshua context. He then wrote about this in a Messianic Jewish Journal.

Yes, the Talmud includes good application of the Torah, along with amazing hair-splitting legalism. There are also stories of the grace and mercy of God and forgiveness in relationships.

It is usually said that Judaism is based on deeds and not creeds. However, there is a basic confession of faith. It is the Sh'ma, *"The Lord is God the LORD alone and to love the LORD with all our soul, strength and might."* The second confession is the prayer known as the Amidah or the Shemoneh Esreh. This amazing prayer of actually 19 confessions is a confession of biblical promises made by Adonai. There is nothing in it that we cannot fully affirm.

I encourage all to study this amazing prayer. It confesses the sovereignty of God, the resurrection of the dead, the coming of the Messiah, and world redemption. It is in the form of blessing God that it is already done. Most scholars say that this prayer was in its basic form in the time of Yeshua. After the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, the prayer was so influential that it was prayed in lieu of bringing the morning and evening sacrifices to the Temple. The idea was to vicariously identify with the sacrifices while praying this prayer in the hope of God accepting this as if we had actually brought a sacrifice.

One of the amazing facts of history is that traditional Jewish prayers became the basis of the communion liturgy prayer of the early historic churches. This especially includes the declaration of Holy, Holy, Holy (Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh) before taking the bread and the wine. (See Louis Bouyer, Eucharist.)
The Kaddish prayer is also very parallel to the Our Father prayer taught by Yeshua.





Within the High Holy Day liturgy, there is an affirmation that our hope is not in our works but only in His grace and mercy. For this, see especially the prayer Avinu Malchainu.

I noted in the mid 1970s the basic universals of Jewish liturgy: the Psalms, the Sh'ma, the Amidah, the Torah Service, the Kaddish and the Aaronic Benediction. I have argued that all should include at least these.

Honoring the Good in Cultures and Honoring our Fathers and Mothers

Many years ago, when I was a student at Wheaton College (a Christian college), every student was expected to read *Christ and Culture* by Richard Niebuhr. This was Wheaton's philosophy in approaching cultures. Cultures are mixtures of good and bad. It is the job of believers to affirm that which is good in culture by biblical standards and to see it transformed by Messiah. How much more is this the case with Jewish tradition, which is so influenced by the Hebrew Bible! When we do not include traditional worship, it projects the unintended message that the prayer tradition of Jewish prayer is not to be respected.

Only Traditional Jewish Worship provides deep rooting

There are many ways that Messianic Jews can express their continued Jewish identity and calling. There is the Hebrew language and identification with Israel. Even moving to Israel and supporting legitimate Jewish causes. However, in my view, ***only Jewish traditional worship provides a deep sense of ancient rooting and continuity with the best expressions of faith from our people.***



I believe that such content is there by the grace of God, who has not left our people without a witness to salvation by grace and the love and mercy of God, and points us to Yeshua. In addition, such traditional worship provides familiarity for Jewish visitors who do know something of Jewish worship.

Traditional Jewish Worship with Passion and Spirit

The question we must therefore ask is, how should Jewish traditional worship be expressed with passion and the manifest presence of God? If the content is biblical and the heart is right in the prayers, why not? I learned about liturgy being done with passion and the presence of the Spirit when we were members of the Lutheran Church (1969-1972). There, Pastor Theodore Laesch led us in the prayers with such fervor and love that we had a great sense of engaging with God through the liturgy. Of course, this was pre-Messianic Judaism, and I did not know of the amazing parallels in the historic church liturgy to the Synagogue liturgy.

I did come to the conviction that as good as Jewish worship is, it is not explicitly new covenantal and not Yeshua-centered, but only in an implied way. Yeshua said that the Father was pleased that we honor the Son as we honor the Father (John 5:23). There are two ways to do this. One is to modify the prayers to bring in Yeshua-centered content. The other is to add new prayers to our already existing prayers, while leaving the traditional prayers basically unchanged.

I think that both approaches, or a combination of the two, are legitimate. In the late 1980s and early 1990s we were again wrestling with the issue of the place of Jewish traditional worship. I have authored a new Messianic Jewish prayer book which modified these prayers. This prayer book is now published. When we first used it for the Rosh Hashanah Service 35 years ago, the sense of the presence of the Spirit was remarkable. The congregation broke out in spontaneous applause during the prayers. They were so affected!

With a capable leader who projects love and fervor as the prayers are led, traditional prayer can be powerfully anointed. We also need to teach the people to pray these prayers with fervor.



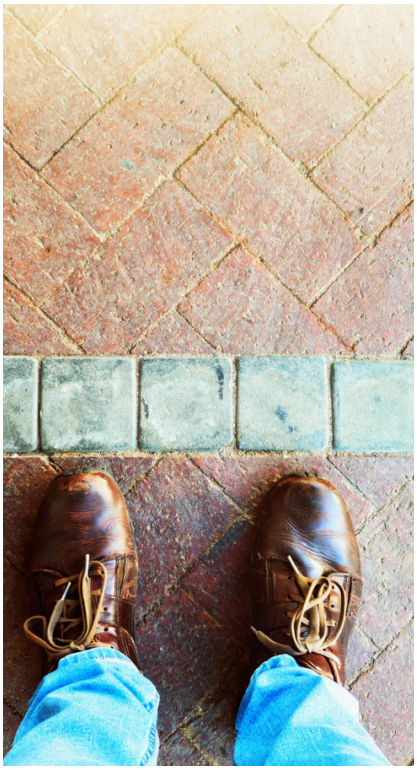
ONLY JEWISH TRADITIONAL WORSHIP PROVIDES A DEEP SENSE OF ANCIENT ROOTING AND CONTINUITY WITH THE BEST EXPRESSIONS OF FAITH FROM OUR PEOPLE.

DANIEL JUSTER

MARK RANTZ







Crossing Boundaries

His name is Garrett, … Garrett Koch, and our recent initial meetings and spiritual connection have been nothing short of miraculous, and manifest with prophetic, supernatural destiny!

But before I embark on telling you his story, allow me to shed some light on my own journey, which early on led me toward full-time ministry and ultimately to becoming a Messianic Rabbi. I was 17 years old and had just come to Yeshua from a life so far from Him and His will for my life.

No sooner had I come to the Lord than a relative of my stepfather, Wendy, a fellow high school student, tried to recruit me to join her at her church, "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints," the Mormons! Wendy had seen, as did my whole family, the life I once led, but now had abandoned it for Yeshua! As a result, she invited me to her congregation (called a Ward) for a weekly morning Bible Study for High School Students called, … believe it or not, "Seminary!" Unbelievable!

Although very new in my faith in Yeshua, I had quickly been given deep discernment and a desire to study God's Word and follow Him radically. At the time, most of my believing friends thought I was a bit "weird," but God was doing a deep work in me that has followed me for 45 years. Not only did I not join Wendy at her "church," but I did a deep dive into reading everything I could get my hands on about the Mormon Church, especially from their own literature) so that I might best be equipped to lovingly lead Mormons to Yeshua, … first with my own step-father's family members, and others. This was not a strange obsession on my part, or something that would divert me from authentic faith, but, instead, Yeshua was writing on my heart, His very heart for those trapped in the cults. I even remember at night, as a young man crying in bed, praying for their salvation and that He would use me to reach them, just as I had been saved, and brought from death to life, of which Jude v. 22 exhorts us to, " …



save them by snatching them out of the fire; but on others have mercy with fear …" (TLV) It was this passion, … God's passion which set a fire in me for those trapped in demonic lies, and instilled in me God's broken heart for them, and a holy fear before the Lord! But God's plan did not stop there, and quickly God's broken heart for the lost exploded in me, calling me to primarily reach Jehovah's Witnesses for Yeshua. Although my burden for Mormons never departed, during this time of deeper calling and anointing, somehow by the grace of God, I was blessed (over about 15-20 years) to lead 48 Jehovah's Witnesses to Yeshua, and, congruently, 19 Mormons!

Now you may remember how above I had stated how many of my friends had thought that I was "weird," and even stupid and a bit strange for wasting my time on the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses. Many would say, "Don't you know, they're a cult," some retorted, "they're evil; they'll get what they deserve - and others attacked, "Don't waste your time on them, or even let them in your home!" But I didn't listen! Instead, I obediently chose the stream that God had set for me in fulfilling His command to do whatever I could do to snatch these precious, yet deceived souls from the demonic grip of the Adversary, and the fires of damnation and separation from God.

Looking at all that I had been delivered from myself, I could never say that someone is a lost cause or that they were too far for Messiah to reach.

At this time, the words of Keith Green's 1984 song, "Jesus Commands Us To Go," (an early Messianic/Hebrew Christian musician) burned in my heart as a new believer with conviction,

Jesus commands us to go, but we go the other way, so he carries the burden alone, while His children are busy at play, feeling so called to stay … Jesus commands us to go; it should be the exception if we stay. It's no wonder we're moving so slow when God's children refuse to obey, feeling so called to stay.

Although in his song, Keith Green was at that time aligned and working with (YWAM) *Youth with a Mission*, and was calling for worldwide evangelization of the lost, for me, the call was clear - that I was to reach those whom the Ruach led to me, knocking on my door every weekend with their Watchtower and Awake magazines. Most believers just shoved them off, but I could not. I would not! As a result, over a large period of time, I collected a large library of Watchtower magazines and books, dating all the way back from the time of their founder, Charles Taze Russell, and his early publication of "*The Divine Plan of the Ages*" (1886) through the late 1990's. With these texts, I would lovingly, patiently, and at times through tears, I would "ask questions that could not be answered," showing these deceived people, made in the image of God, how they had been lied to and the stark contradiction their leaders, called "the Governing Body," had peddled to them for decades.



Many scoffed and ran away; others became angry and cursed me, but a lesser few saw the truth, … the real truth, … and abandoned Watchtower and gave their hearts and lives to Yeshua/Jesus, who loves them with an everlasting love!

Thank God, I did not have to do this alone, as God placed me in a strong network of believers (men and women, both ex-JWs and non-ex-JWs), and we sought to spend our lives for what Jenn Johnson (Bethel Music, 2017) sang as a prayer in For the One, stating, "Help me to love with open arms like You do. A love that erases all the lines and sees the truth. Oh, that when they look at my eyes, they would see You; even in a smile, they would feel the Father's love."

So, what then of this Garrett Koch to whom I've initially spoken, and the unique, yet intriguing title of this article, Crossing Boundaries, … and yes, what about the rest … my story? … Well, for that, you will have to wait and ponder for our next (Kislev) edition.

But friends, please don't just wait… and certainly don't forget… use this time, as we prepare for Kislev and our soon-coming celebration of Chanukah, to ask how God might stir your heart for "the one!" Ask Him to birth in you the words of Jude verse 22, His passion to set a fire in me for those trapped in demonic lies, and to receive God's broken heart for those lost, the broken, the hopeless, and the spiritual outcast! Ask Yeshua this month,



Lord, how can I be an agent of blessing and bring salvation to those whom the world (and maybe even those within the Body) have written off? How can I reach the strangers, the isolated, the foreigner - the forgotten? And Yeshua, how can you use me to reach those trapped and without hope, whom, apart from divine intervention and my willingness to go, will eternally be separated from you, the Author of Life?

See you next month ...





Yeshua was writing
on my heart,
His very heart
for those trapped in
the cults.

MARK RANTZ

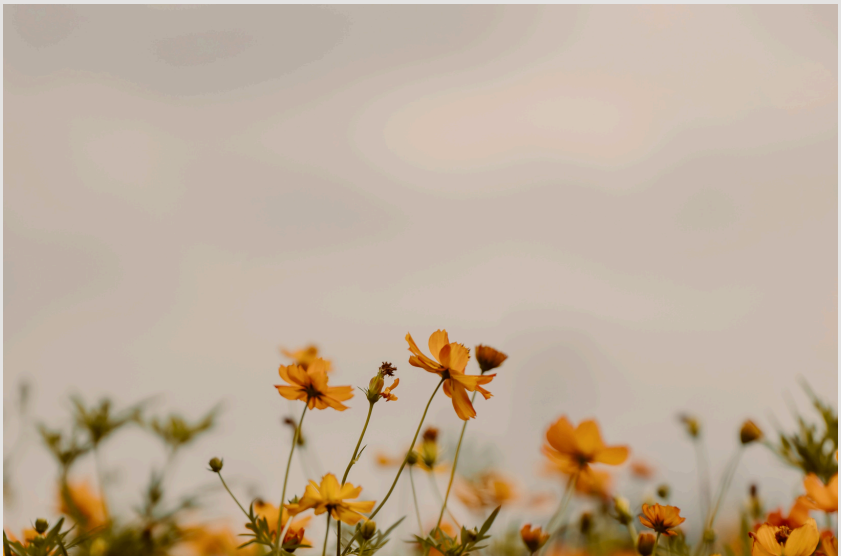
ZACHARY WILLIAMS



REDEEMED BY A REDEEMER

DIFFICULT LESSONS FROM JOB'S STORY, PART 3

As part three of this article series and the examination of difficult lessons from Job, we will now focus on Job himself. While I want to address some of the most quoted parts of Job, again I think we sometimes draw out only part of the lesson. When Job suffers and still responds well, it is far better than many of us do. So perhaps we should be more circumspect before we 'feel like Job' in our suffering. Then when Job makes a mistake and justifies himself, perhaps we should be more hesitant to claim our own innocence or righteousness in a situation. Job did a lot right, so when he did something wrong, the lesson became for us much clearer.



Through the book, we can tell that Job's initial response was at least still faithful to Adonai (Job 1:21-22, 2:9-10), even though he was in great suffering. At the end of the book, Adonai restores Job double of all that he had lost. So, what happened in between? What happened that caused Adonai to question Job (Job 40:7)? While Job's integrity was tested by his suffering, it was tested even more so when it was directly attacked by his wife and friends (Job 2:3, 2:9, 27:5, 31:6).

At first it seemed it was just a conversation, or his friends trying to make a point based on their beliefs. It eventually became a full-on argument that led to Job essentially exploding back at them. In fact, Job 25 is the shortest argument from Job's friends toward him, followed by Job's longest argument in response at Job 26-31. I believe it was because Job finally lost patience, interrupted his friend, and went on a rant to get them to shut their mouths – which they finally did (Job 32:1).



Job's friends had used their 'righteousness' to condemn Job. Job used his righteousness to defend himself. There is a big difference. Defending himself was not his mistake. Someone falsely accused has the right to defend oneself. Job's rebukes back to his friends were often more accurate than their accusations.

The mistake Job made was not defending himself against his friends, but rather justifying himself and demanding Adonai see and answer – as if somehow Adonai would not have allowed this if he had known Job's righteousness. There is a subtle shift from arguing with his friends to wanting Adonai to be present so he can make his case with Adonai. There is a shift from defending himself against false accusations to justifying himself before Adonai. He shifts from being the victim to playing the victim and demanding justice. While the change and the mistake are clear in the text, we should consider how easy it is for us to shift in the same way in difficult situations. How easy it is to be angry about a situation or our suffering and not realize that we have become angry at Adonai Himself, thinking He has been unjust toward us.

How would Job have responded differently if he had known Adonai had already vouched for Job's righteousness?

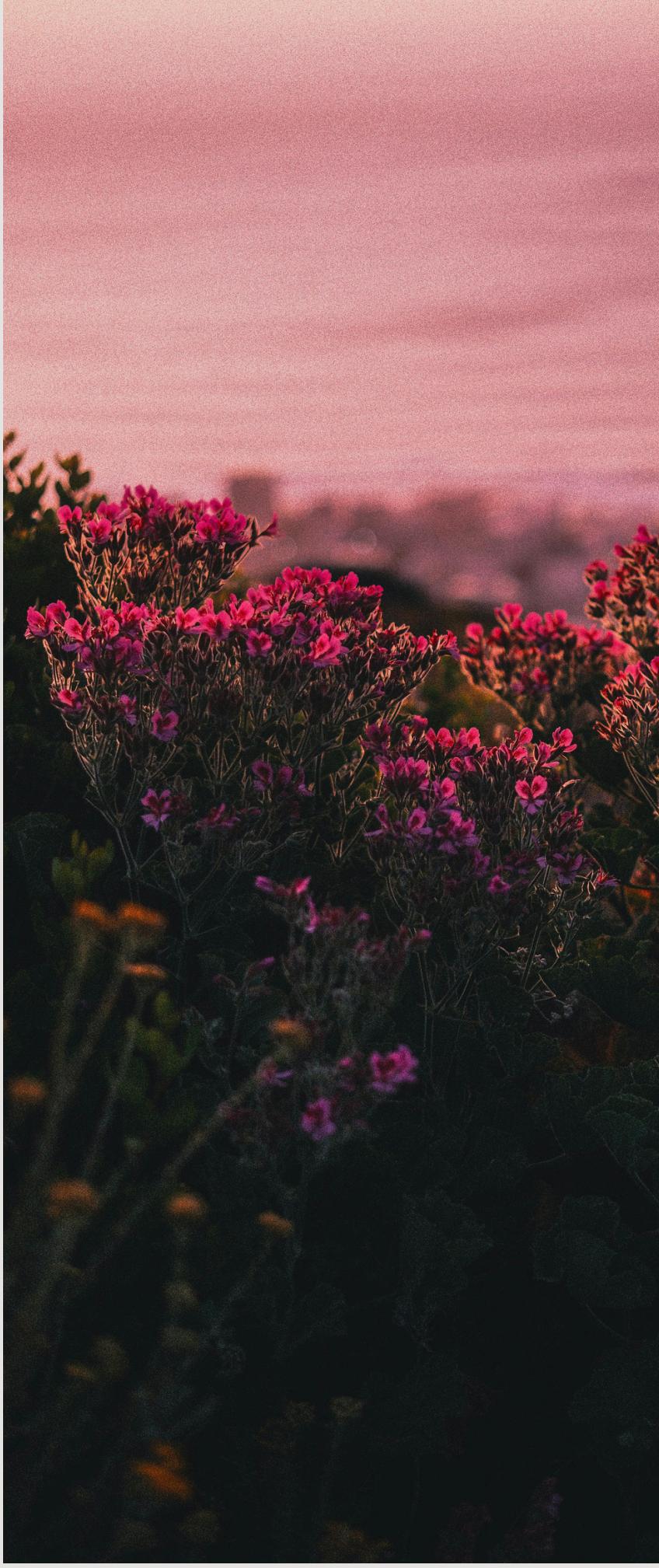
Before we get to Adonai's rebuke of Job, we need to consider a unique character that suddenly appears just before Adonai shows up. Nobody in the situation knows Adonai is coming, perhaps not even the reader the first

time you read it. This makes the statements of Elihu quite profound. He has the ‘final word' in the situation against Job; Adonai does not rebuke Elihu like he does Job, and He does not require a sacrifice of Elihu as He does of Job’s friends.

At a high level, Elihu says very similar ‘truth’ statements as Job and his friends – glorifying Adonai and acknowledging He is a God of justice. However, one key difference is that Elihu explains how Adonai responds to repentance (Job 36:5-12) – which neither Job nor his friends mentioned at all. Also, he explains to Job that he will be judged by what he is saying and doing right in front of them at that very moment (Job 34:34-37). He nails it because that is exactly what Adonai rebukes Job for just afterwards. Job and his friends, in their arguing about how and why this happened to Job, were blind to the fact that they would be judged by what they said in the argument.

The difficult lesson here is that while suffering may or may not be a judgment and consequence of our sin, we most certainly will be judged by how we respond to suffering. If Adonai showed up at the end of an argument you were in, what do you think He would say about what you said in the argument? I think most of us would be quite ashamed, even more than Job.

But Adonai does not show up at the end of most arguments, does He? I think most of the arguments are not worth His time, and He will clean up the mess on the Day of Judgment (Matthew 12:36).



He did not really have to show up at the end of this argument in Job either, so there must be a lesson in His doing so. In fact, I think it was the mercy of Adonai to show up and sort it all out. He spent a lot of time rebuking Job but essentially did not waste any time correcting Job's friends – only telling them they were wrong and needed atonement for their sins to be forgiven. When a righteous man sins and that sin becomes the focus, it can allow the wicked to hide their sins. It makes it easier for the wicked to seem justified in their accusations against the righteous even though the wicked would never stand under the same scrutiny. Job even makes that case back to his friends that if they are correct in their reasoning, then they also should be afraid (Job 19:28-29). This is another difficult lesson of Job that is similar to Yeshua's 'judge not, lest you be judged in the same way' (Matthew 7:1-2). Having the courage of our convictions means focusing on our own sins and holding ourselves more accountable than we hold others, even when we have authority to hold others accountable.

Adonai's rebuke of Job is more complete than that, though. Adonai's rebuke is not just about what Job said or did and whether it was right or wrong. Instead, His rebuke rests on who He is (the eternal one) and who Job is, a man. His rebuke is based on the idea that Job believed he had the right to make a final judgment when he was not the final judge. His rebuke shows Job that he cannot make that kind of claim without also claiming that Adonai is somehow wrong in His choices and judgments (Job 40:8).





The difficult lesson here demands that we understand the level of consequences proportional to the level of judgment we choose to make. If you do not understand the consequences or conclusions of what your judgment would mean, then do not make the judgment. Do you think Adonai is unfair, and then better understand what is fair? Do you think Adonai is no longer good because bad things have happened to you that you think you did not deserve?

While Job made that mistake, Job was not required to make a sacrifice for his own sin like what was required of Job's friends. His repentance directly to Adonai was enough in this case. Why? Well, ancient stories were often told in chiastic structures, and the answer is often not at the end, but in the middle. Job's faith was in Adonai, and Adonai was more faithful to Job than vice versa. Job knew that resurrection was in the hands of his redeemer, and he knew that he was redeemed despite his sin (Job 19:25-27). That was Job's faith, and that was why he was justified. He made a mistake, but he was also quick to repent of it once it was clearly revealed to him by Adonai Himself (Job 40:4-5). Redemption is by repentance and faith, not by righteous acts and then proving your righteousness.

The story of Job is even a powerful allegory of the entire Besorah (Gospel). A righteous man that Adonai delights in is chosen to suffer. The enemy tries to bring that man down through that suffering and temptation to sin. The man suffers loss, physical harm, and false accusations, yet does not sin as a response.

Before Adonai shows up, there is another who precedes him and teaches clear truth (Elihu is like Elijah). The righteous man is the one to obtain forgiveness for those who sinned against him and against Adonai. The hope of that righteous man lies in his resurrection (Job 19:25-27). Adonai shows up at the end and judges all men – dividing the righteous and the wicked. So in that way, Job's redemption is also our redemption.

Now I can do what I could not do in the first two articles – wrap this up nicely for you. I do not think the right lesson from Job was about how Adonai doubly restored him, and then we should expect that Adonai will restore to us in this life for all of our troubles. Instead, I think the lesson is that we have a Redeemer regardless of what happens to us in this life, and Adonai both chose to let Job suffer and chose to restore Job to prove He was that Redeemer. We should trust that He is the judge who sees and not be so quick to put ourselves in His place of judgment.

More than knowing what Adonai wants us to do, we need to know who Adonai is. Job finally understood the only way to know Adonai was directly, rather than through what others told him (Job 42:1-6). Yeshua, being the exact representation of the Father, is our redeemer and how we come to know Adonai. We are justified by faith in our Redeemer rather than our own words and deeds. And that matters far more than all the suffering we will experience in this life (Romans 8:18).



WE HAVE A REDEEMER REGARDLESS OF WHAT HAPPENS TO US IN THIS LIFE, AND ADONAI BOTH CHOSE TO LET JOB SUFFER AND CHOSE TO RESTORE JOB TO PROVE HE WAS THAT REDEEMER.

ZACHARY WILLIAMS

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