

2025-09-13 Fulfilling the Great Commission

It's been a heavy week

Last Friday – awful video of the murder of Iryna Zarutka in NC was released

Monday - terrorist attack in Jerusalem, 6 killed, 6 seriously injured

Tuesday - Israel attacked Hamas leaders in Qatar

But, for the first time, seems to have missed getting them all

Wednesday – Charlie Kirk assassinated

He was founder of Turning Point USA a conservative student organization

Had chapters on 3500 campuses, Praise the Lord his murderer was caught

Been accusations on social media Israel assassinated him

Charlie Kirk's life inspired many to speak up boldly for righteousness

I'm praying his death will inspire many more, including some of you

Thursday was 24th anniversary of 9/11- brought back many memories

All of us have been shaken up with all these heavy events happening in 1 week

Ruach Ha Kodesh led me to share a message that will bring us together

A passage dealing with our unity as Jews & Gentiles

One new man, one new humanity & our relationship to God's laws

Last week looked at Godincidences that directed Peter

To bring Good News to Gentiles in Acts 10

& how God showed Peter that Gentiles could be saved by faith in Yeshua alone

Acts 11:1 The emissaries (apostles) and the brothers throughout Y'hudah heard that the Goyim (Gentiles) had received the word of God;

2 but when Kefa went up to Yerushalayim, the members of the Circumcision faction criticized him,

Circumcision faction were Messianic Jews who believed Gentiles who put their trust

In Yeshua's atoning sacrifice to pay the penalty for their sin

Had to be circumcised to be saved & become part of His Body

To be brought into fellowship with Jews

Circumcision was actually short for keeping all what we'll call the Jewish laws

Laws relating to ritual purity, circumcision, holidays, foods

& in those days, Temple worship, sacrifices, priesthood, government

God gave Israel these laws to keep us separate from the nations

& so Messiah would be able to live in a culture where He could
Be obedient to God's laws, & thus be without sin

So He could be the unblemished lamb, without sin

Remember, every believer has to obey the Torah's moral laws

Like do not murder, steal, honor you parents

& its spiritual laws

Like do not worship idols, do not use God's name in vain

Circumcision faction said to Peter

3 saying, "You went into the homes of uncircumcised men and even ate with them!"

Complaint dealt with the fence around purity laws

This faction, all Messianic Jews, believed in the validity of fence around the purity laws

Which are in Leviticus 15, 21 & 22

That fence was not created by God, but by the religious leaders of the time

It was one of what Yeshua called the rulings of men

That made the Word of God of no effect

Fence was that Jews could not enter the home of a Gentile

Or have a friendly relationship with a Gentile

Because Gentiles did not observe the purity laws

& a Jew who entered their house could become ritually unclean

By touching things in that house

& if they were unclean they could not worship at the Temple

Which was where God's presence dwelt in those days

So, the Circumcision faction were upset Peter went in Cornelius' home

& ate with him

How did it make the Word of God of no effect?

Good News could not have gone to the Gentiles

If that fence had not been torn down

4 In reply, Kefa began explaining in detail what had actually happened:

Which we read in detail last week

God created 4 Godincidences to convince Peter to tear down that fence

& go to the house of Cornelius a Roman soldier & share Good News

Peter described those Godincidences & continued on saying

15 *"But I had hardly begun speaking when the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) fell on them, just as on us at the beginning!*

There was a visible sign, a manifestation of Ruach Ha Kodesh

After those Gentiles heard the Good News

It was that they praised God with words they didn't understand

Speaking in tongues, a heavenly language

Just like **in the beginning** on Shavuot, 50 days after Yeshua's resurrection

16 *And I (Peter) remembered that the Lord had said, 'Yochanan (John) used to immerse people in water, but you will be immersed in the Ruach HaKodesh.'*

The manifestation was a sign of these Gentiles being immersed in Ruach Ha Kodesh

17 *Therefore, if God gave them the same gift as he gave us after we had come to put our trust in the Lord Yeshua the Messiah, who was I to stand in God's way?"*

Gentiles receiving gift of speaking in tongues, just like 120 Jewish disciples

On Shavuot, convinced Peter that God was bringing Gentiles into

Kingdom of God

Meaning, God made them His children

Because of their trust in Yeshua, so they were now part of His family

Body of Messiah, mishpokhah, children of God with eternal life

18 *On hearing these things, they **stopped objecting** and began to praise God, saying, "This means that God has enabled the Goyim as well to do t'shuvah (repent) and have life!"*

PTL these Messianic Jews who **had been** in the Circumcision faction were able to see God

Was changing things, removing fence, partition, m'chitzah, dividing wall

All these Messianic Jews now believed 3 important things

1. Gentiles could be saved by putting their trust in Yeshua's atoning sacrifice

To pay the penalty for their sins without being circumcised

2. & without pledging to learn Torah & obey its Jewish laws

3. Messianic Jews could have genuine fellowship with saved Gentiles, disciple them

Because God had torn down the fence around the law

Seemed like that should have been the end of the issue

20 However, some of these, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, when they arrived at Antioch, began speaking to the Greeks too, proclaiming the Good News of the Lord Yeshua.

21 The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number of people trusted and turned to the Lord.

People here in Antioch included many Gentiles

Rest of Chapter 11 – apostles sent Barnabas to Antioch to disciple them

Barnabas brought Sha'ul to Antioch to help him

& they worked together there for a year, note the passage of time

Chapter 12 deals with events in Jerusalem & King Herod

Chapter 13 covers Sha'ul's & Barnabas' first journey to Salamis, Pathos, Perga, Pisidion Antioch, Iconium

13:5 After landing in Salamis, they began proclaiming the word of God in the synagogues...

Even though the apostles understood Gentiles could receive the Good News

They went first to synagogues because the Jews

Had the background of Tenakh to understand the Good News

Entire message of the Good News Sha'ul gave in Pisidion Antioch is recorded

In Chapter 13 & the opposition they experienced

*43 When the synagogue meeting broke up, many of the **born Jews** and devout **proselytes** followed Sha'ul and Bar-Nabba (Barnabas), who spoke with them and urged them to keep holding fast to the love and kindness of God.*

The proselytes were Gentiles interested in becoming Jews

44 The next Shabbat, nearly the whole city gathered together to hear the message about the Lord;

Great move of Ruach Ha Kodesh

But, success provoked jealousy among those who did not receive Good News

So, those who did receive separated from existing synagogue

& formed their own congregation

I believe this congregation & others they established were much like ours

Jews & Gentiles worshipping together

Back then, the Gentiles would not have known the scriptures, the Tenakh

Remember BH had not yet been written

But, Messianic Jews knew the scriptures, so they would have been the leaders

& Gentile participants would have followed their Jewish brethren's lead
 In keeping mo'adim, what foods they ate at Onegs, etc.

In Chapter 14 Sha'ul & Barnabas moved on to Iconium

*14:3 Therefore, Sha'ul and Bar-Nabba remained for a **long time**, speaking boldly about the Lord, who bore witness to the message about his love and kindness by enabling them to perform signs and miracles.*

In Iconium we get some knowledge of the time passing a **long time**
 & that God was doing miracles

After experiencing opposition they went to the surrounding country
 Then Sha'ul & Barnabas went to a city called Derbe

21 After proclaiming the Good News in that city and making many people into talmidim (disciples), they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch,

A return journey, spending significant time in each city

Where they had planted a congregation

23 After appointing elders for them in every congregation, Sha'ul and Bar-Nabba, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord in whom they had put their trust.

Then they returned to Antioch from where they'd started

28 And they stayed for some time there with the talmidim.

Again, **some time** passed

Now we come to Acts 15

Scholars believe it was 6-12 years after Acts 10 when Peter visited Cornelius

& the revelation came that God was bringing the Gentiles into His Body

You'd think 6 – 12 years after God gave them a dramatic sign that Gentiles

Who trusted in Yeshua's sacrifice & made Him Lord

Became members of God's family

All Messianic Jews would see that God had taken down the fence around
 purity laws

15:1 But some men came down from Y'hudah (Judea) to Antioch and began teaching the brothers, "You can't be saved unless you undergo b'rit-milah (circumcision) in the manner prescribed by Moshe."

Remember, circumcision is shorthand for observing all Jewish laws in Torah

It was 6-12 years after Peter concluded this belief was not correct

& those of the Circumcision Faction who were with him agreed

Others had joined the Circumcision Faction & were now objecting
To Gentiles being saved by faith

2 This brought them into no small measure of discord and dispute with Sha'ul and Bar-Nabba. So the congregation assigned Sha'ul, Bar-Nabba and some of themselves to go and put this sh'eilah (question) before the emissaries (apostles) and the elders up in Yerushalayim.

Luke understates the conflict – no small measure of discord & dispute

I suspect it was a fierce debate

This gathering is called the Council of Jerusalem

Why did they send Sha'ul & Barnabas? Because they'd brought Good News

To Gentiles in all the cities they had visited & stayed in

& they had not taught that those Gentiles needed to be circumcised

& they had experienced many miracles of healing & deliverance

among the Gentiles

5 But some of those who had come to trust were from the party of the P'rushim (Pharisees); and they stood up and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them and direct them to observe the Torah of Moshe."

In the Greek we must command they be circumcised

& keep the Jewish part of Torah

Remember this applied to a particular category of Torah, the Jewish laws

Everyone, Jew or Gentile had to obey the spiritual & moral laws of Torah

According to the Circumcision Faction Gentiles had to keep the laws in Torah

That set Israel apart from the nations

Circumcision, keep the Moadim, food laws, etc.

& at that time the Temple laws concerning sacrifices & worship

This is even an issue in Israel today when a Gentile wants to convert to Judaism

It has to be done by an Orthodox Rabbi, not Conservative or Reformed

If its a man, he has to be circumcised & commit to obeying Torah of Moshe

But, many convert to become citizens & don't hold to that commitment

& Israeli rabbis have a hard time enforcing it

So, how did the Pharisees hope to police Gentiles who put their trust in Yeshua

To be sure they were keeping the laws of Moses?

Especially Gentiles in the Diaspora, far from the rabbis in Jerusalem

If the Circumcision Faction had their way

Yeshua's Great Commission – preach the Good News to all creation
Would never have been fulfilled

7 After lengthy debate, Kefa (Peter) got up and said to them, "Brothers, you yourselves know that a good while back, God chose me from among you to be the one by whose mouth the Goyim should hear the message of the Good News and come to trust.

A good while back – 6-12 years ago

This is 3rd time Peter's account was recorded in Bible, so it must be important

8 And God, who knows the heart, bore them witness by giving the Ruach HaKodesh to them, just as he did to us;

9 that is, he made no distinction between us and them, but cleansed their heart by trust.

10 So why are you putting God to the test now by placing a yoke on the neck of the talmidim which neither our fathers nor we have had the strength to bear?

Some understand this unbearable yoke as the Torah

But that contradicts Jewish belief that Torah is considered to be a delight
Stern says the unbearable yoke was fence of rules religious leaders had made

Like the rule that a Jew could not enter the house of a Gentile

Like 600 rules concerning Shabbat that Orthodox Jews must obey today

I agree with Stern because that fence is really what this conflict was all about

Pharisees would not accept Gentile believers into fellowship with them

Unless they got circumcised & kept the Jewish laws of Torah

11 No, it is through the love and kindness of the Lord Yeshua that we trust and are delivered-and it's the same with them."

Everyone is saved the same way – believing Yeshua rose from the dead

Making Yeshua Lord

& trusting in Yeshua's atoning sacrifice to pay penalty we deserve

12 Then the whole assembly kept still as they listened to Bar-Nabba and Sha'ul tell what signs and miracles God had done through them among the Gentiles.

Signs and miracles were evidence that God was indeed moving among Gentiles

Who trusted in Yeshua

Bringing them into His family, Kingdom of God, kehilot, Body of Messiah

Without them being circumcised & keeping the Jewish laws part of Torah

Yaakov (James) spoke up

He was a brother of Yeshua who had become leader of Messianic Jews in Jerusalem

14 Shim'on has told in detail what God did when he first began to show his concern for taking from among the Goyim (Gentiles) a people to bear his name. Some from among the Gentiles are to be "a people to bear His name"

19 "Therefore, my opinion is that we should not put obstacles in the way of the Goyim who are turning to God.

20 Instead, we should write them a letter telling them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from fornication, from what is strangled and from blood.

Why these four things? Actually 3, when an animal is slaughtered by strangling

The blood does not drain out, so it is the same as eating or drinking blood

Polluted by idols because the pagans offered sacrifices to their gods

Fornication because there was a lot of it in Roman culture

These rules enable Jews & Gentiles to have table fellowship

A vital part of discipling people

Messianic Jews, who were all keeping the Jewish laws of Torah, like the food laws

Could eat with Gentiles & therefore have table fellowship with Gentiles

Who kept these 3 rules

If a Gentile host served his Messianic Jewish guest a pork chop or shrimp

The Messianic Jew could easily explain he could not eat such food

But, if the Gentile host served beef with blood in it

Or that had been offered to an idol

His Jewish guest would have no way of knowing

& would unknowingly violate God's food laws for Jews

21 For from the earliest times, Moshe has had in every city those who proclaim him, with his words being read in the synagogues every Shabbat."

This verse leads to the application of this for us today

How this is relevant today

I emphasized that Jerusalem Council was 6-12 years

After Ruach Ha Kodesh showed Peter Gentiles could be saved by trusting in Yeshua

Without being circumcised, i.e. following the Jewish laws of Torah

So, 6-12 years had passed & the Jerusalem Council met

Because believers still differed over

How Gentiles were saved & how they were to live

The application of this to us today, its relevance

Is that 1925 years later believers still differ on the same question

But with a twist – now it is mostly Gentiles rather than Jews

Who want Gentiles to follow the Jewish laws of Torah

Of course not including circumcision

Their understanding of this verse has led to the development of

What is called the Hebrew Roots movement

Hebrew Roots interpretation – once a Gentile is saved by trusting in Yeshua

He **should** learn the Jewish laws of Torah

& begin & continue living observing Jewish laws

In order to be right with God

This belief became prominent in the 1840s

& led to the establishment of 7th Day Baptists & Adventists

& the Herbert W. Armstrong's Worldwide Church of God

Messianic Jewish Movement interpretation – once a Gentile is saved by trusting in Yeshua

He is welcome to learn Torah

& adopt whatever Jewish Torah observances Ruach Ha Kodesh leads him to adopt

Ex: Gentiles might follow the kosher food laws for health reasons

Gentiles might worship on Shabbat because the Lord said

He blessed the 7th day

But, we don't need to become more holy, more pleasing to God

Which interpretation is correct? Look to writings of Sha'ul to decide

(TLV) Galatians 2:16 Yet we know that a person is set right not by deeds based on Torah, but rather through putting trust in Messiah Yeshua. So even we have put our trust in Messiah Yeshua, in order that we might be set right based on trust in Messiah and not by deeds based on Torah—because no human will be justified by deeds based on Torah.

The Hebrew Roots understanding also leads to considering those Gentiles & Jews

Who trust in Yeshua & don't live as Jews to **not** be following Ruach Ha Kodesh

Which leads to them being considered in sin
& requires breaking fellowship with them

Them including most of the spirit filled, Bible believing church

So, the apostles wrote & sent a letter to the Gentiles declaring this conclusion
Acts 15:28 For it seemed good to the Ruach HaKodesh and to us not to lay any heavier burden on you than the following requirements:

29 to abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from fornication. If you keep yourselves from these, you will be doing the right thing. Shalom!

Now let's look at the difference in purpose between Messianic Jewish Movement & Hebrew Roots Movement

Messianic Jewish Movement's primary purpose is to effectively reach Jewish people with Good News

We believe this is of the highest priority to God & all believers

Because Yeshua said to the Jewish people in Jerusalem

Matthew 23:39 For I tell you, from now on, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of ADONAI.'"

Which is the Hebrew way of welcoming an honored guest

So we understand Yeshua will not return until the Jewish people
Receive Him as Messiah

As a Messianic Jewish Congregation, Congregation Shema Yisrael's primary calling is to reach Jewish people with the good news

Our purpose is to proclaim Messiah Yeshua (Jesus) to Jewish and non-Jewish people, connect them personally with the God of Israel through teaching, prayer and worship, draw them into fellowship, lead them to become spiritually mature, equip them to serve, and inspire believers everywhere to reconnect with their Jewish roots.

Our detailed Purpose Statement starts with our **primary** calling

In evangelism: to effectively and lovingly proclaim the fullness, and Jewishness, of the Biblical Gospel of Messiah Yeshua, first to Jewish people, but also to the nations (non-Jewish people), locally and worldwide, and to

inspire and train Messiah's Body to effectively proclaim the Gospel to Jewish people.

This task is very difficult because of the centuries

Of persecution of Jews by the church

& by people who claimed by be Christians but really weren't

As a congregation we keep many Jewish laws & follow many Jewish traditions

That are not in conflict with Bible teaching

To establish our identity as a Messianic Jewish Congregation & not a church

Also, so our events & services are familiar experiences for Jewish people

& to contradict the lie that Jewish people have been taught

That you can't be Jewish and believe in Jesus

A lie that both Jewish religious leaders and church leaders have taught

& a lie that keeps Jewish people from even considering Yeshua is Messiah

& we also keep those laws & traditions because God gave them to Israel

So they are our spiritual, Biblical heritage as Jews

God has written them on our Jewish hearts

In doing this we have uncovered many wonderful Jewish Roots of Christianity

These roots have contributed greatly to our understanding of Yeshua

What He was like & what the culture He lived in was like

& thus strengthened our faith & our walk with the Lord

These Jewish Roots have attracted many Gentiles believers to join us

Because they want to know Yeshua better

& we welcome those Gentiles to be part of us

They are precious to us & a tremendous help to us in fulfilling our calling

We follow the instructions of the apostles at the Council of Jerusalem

& welcome those Gentiles whom Ruach Ha Kodesh has drawn to us

But we don't pressure them to follow Torah's Jewish laws or Jewish traditions

In their private lives, we leave that up to each individual & Ruach Ha Kodesh

Over the years many Messianic Congregations have experienced Gentiles from their congregations

Leaving to participate in a Hebrew Roots group, often starting as a home group

Or as a group following the teachings of a Hebrew Roots teacher online

We recently had the same sad experience, I've been praying for all of them
We've also learned people in the group that has left have been talking to others
With the intent of recruiting people to join them

Unfortunately, most people don't know the difference between us
So, Ruach Ha Kodesh directed me to do some more explaining of the difference

Between Hebrew Roots movement primary calling
& Messianic Jewish Movement's primary calling

In the past few decades many Gentiles have become very interested
In Jewish Roots of their Christian faith & Jewish Torah & traditions
To the point of learning and practicing those things
Becoming their **primary** calling

This emphasis is what they call the Hebrew Roots movement
Their purpose is to live in greater obedience to the Jewish laws in Torah
We in Messianic Jewish Movement have no problem with those in the Hebrew Roots movement

Whose purpose is to learn more about the Jewish Roots of Christianity
& who are led to obey the Jewish laws in Torah

But we see their purpose as different from Messianic Jewish Movement
Which is called to reach Jewish people with the Good News

The "creed" those who left gave us has no mention of reaching Jewish people
Or support for Israel

Sadly, those in Hebrew Roots movement often pose a problem for Messianic Jewish in several ways

1. they attract people who have been supporting members of Messianic Jewish Congregations

Reducing our ability to bear fruit in our primary calling to Jewish people

2. because they are focused on Torah they fall into many disputes

On how to correctly keep the Jewish Torah, which is legalism
& some walk away from their faith

3. they develop spiritual pride in believing they are the only believers who
Are truly being led by Ruach Ha Kodesh

4.that pride leads to them considering believers who do not focus on Torah
As not being led by Ruach Ha Kodesh, therefore in sin & not to be
fellowshipped with

Thus isolating themselves from the rest of the Body of Messiah
Which the Messianic Jewish Movement does not do

5. they claim they are the true Israel, thus replacing the Jewish people
As God's chosen people

Hebrew Roots teachers and study programs are very prevalent on the internet

If a group is promoting Torah study they are probably Hebrew Roots
Be aware that the group that has left may attempt to recruit some of you

If they do please let me know because they have told us they wouldn't
Last Shabbat we had a meeting after service to share what had happened

At that meeting I gave out the letter this group sent us

& a 57 page paper on Hebrew Roots published by the IAMCS

I have copies of those for all who want one

Also we video recorded last week's meeting

Send me an email and I'll send you the link to the video

Prayer

Thank you for your great love for all people, Gentiles as well as Jews

Thank you for tearing down the fence the dividing wall between Jews and
Gentiles

Thank you for clearly making a way for Gentiles to be saved just by trusting in
Your sacrifice & making You Lord

Thank you for moving by Ruach Ha Kodesh at the Council of Jerusalem &
instructing the disciples on how to deal with Gentile believers

Thank you for the call & purpose of the Messianic Jewish Movement – to reach
Jewish people with Good News

Help us to be effective

To establish our identity Messianic Jews

For Jewish people to respect & be curious about our identity

Thank you for the many Gentiles who have joined with us

May they find purpose & fulfillment serving here

Bless those who have left with revelation of Your truth

Protect our people whom you've called to the Messianic Jewish Movement's purpose

From falling into this diversion from our calling