

A Standard For Messianic Jewish Revival

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God has given us an account of Messianic Jewish revival at its best in the Book of Acts, especially the first 15 chapters which reference the Messianic Synagogue in Jerusalem. There we find a dynamic standard with astounding results. The trail that the early believers blazed is marked by seven guiding principles. As we follow their example, we can also experience their results.

I. Yeshua Focused

Their hopes had been shattered at the tree of sacrifice. The One they trusted to bring the Kingdom of God to Israel was dead. Then suddenly, He appeared to the apostles--alive! Indeed He presented Himself alive by many infallible proofs to numerous eyewitnesses. This report of "Good News" released electrifying faith among the Jewish believers in Jerusalem. Once again, Yeshua became the supreme object of their affections and the preeminent subject of their preaching. Simon Peter, in summarizing His great message on the day of Shavuot concludes by saying, "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Yeshua, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah" (Acts 2: 36). They emphasized the Person of Yeshua, His deity, His substitutionary death, His resurrection, the power and authority of His Name and His promised return. Yeshua was and still is the foundation of Messianic Judaism. "For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Messiah Yeshua" (1 Cor. 3: 11). It is upon this rock alone that He builds a victorious, overcoming congregation. The gates of hell will not prevail against it.

The Scriptures teach that it is not wise to judge ourselves by ourselves. Where then can we look for a standard if not among ourselves? Where can we look for an ideal that will press us forward with burning zeal for Messianic Jewish revival in the 21st century?



II. Word Based

Both the apostles and the people dedicated themselves to the Word of God. The apostles decided not to leave the Word of God to serve meals to the widows. They purposefully devoted themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word. The people also continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and were transformed by it. It was their constant emphasis not just on facts or information from the Bible, but on "revelational truth" that changed lives. They presented vital truth

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with mighty unction from the Holy Spirit. The believers hungrily received it and were set free.

In addition to focusing on the Person of Yeshua, they most certainly emphasized the need for repentance, taking up the tree of sacrifice daily, living the crucified life, the new birth, new life in the Spirit, persevering faith and, of course, love.

III. Spirit Filled

Messianic Judaism was birthed and empowered by an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The early believers were filled with the Spirit on Shavuot as a result of intensely seeking for the promise of the Father in prayer. Simon Peter's words assured the men of Israel to whom he later spoke, "the promise is for you and your children and all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call"(Acts 2: 39).

After experiencing strong opposition from the Sanhedrin, they again sought the in-filling of the Spirit through prayer for continued boldness to preach, along with power to heal the sick and perform miracles. As a result of their intense and earnest prayer, the very house where they met was shaken, and they were again filled with the Holy Spirit. If they recognized their utter dependence on the empowerment of the Spirit and sought so intensely for it, shouldn't we?

IV. Devoted to Prayer

As we just saw, the disciples earnestly sought for the Spirit in prayer and definitely received Him. But that, of course, was not the only thing they prayed for--prayer was their life! When Peter was arrested by Herod who intended to kill him after the Passover, "constant prayer was offered to God for him by the congregation" (Acts 12:5). As a result, they received another definite answer to prayer. An angel of

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the Lord was sent to miraculously free him from prison. This dynamic and effectual prayer life was modeled by the leadership and filtered down to the entire congregation. The apostles devoted themselves to prayer to the degree that James, the leader of the congregation, was reported to have developed callouses [sic] on his knees due to his incessant prayer life.

We desperately need praying leaders and praying congregations. Prayer is like shoveling coals into the furnace of a steam engine. Our prayers alone are the coals that fuel the fires of Messianic Jewish revival and keep us constantly "filled with the Spirit..." (Eph 5: 18).

V. Outreach Oriented

Yeshua explained the purpose for receiving the power of the Spirit before He ascended into heaven. "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses..." (Acts 1: 8).

It is so easy for us to be consumed by things happening "in the congregation". Furthermore, opposition is designed to intimidate us into a retreat mode so that we remain cloistered behind four walls. Nevertheless, we must manifest a fighting spirit to stay focused on reaching the unsaved world "outside the congregation". This is the Messiah's great commission, and we must not neglect it.

In spite of an enormous congregation to look after and intense opposition from the religious community, our predecessors were accused of filling Jerusalem with this teaching. When finally they were scattered because of persecution, they went everywhere preaching the Word.

VI. Messianic Jewish

The believers in Jerusalem were, of course, Jews who remained extremely loyal to their own Jewish people, their nation and their heritage. Before Yeshua ascended in the cloud, they zealously asked Him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1: 6).



They continued to be involved in Temple worship and lived their lives as Jews among Jews. This is most natural for us too. We who have received the Messiah

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desire to retain our God-given Jewish identity. We are the natural olives grafted back onto our own olive tree. Our Messianic Synagogue is the natural habitat for an authentic Jewish lifestyle.

VII. Community

Finally, the Messiah's most identifiable mark on the disciples was their genuine love for one another and the deep spirit of unity that prevailed among them. Many sold their possessions and sacrificed for others who did not have enough. They ate together, prayed together and had continual fellowship together. Much of what we call fellowship today is really socializing. True spiritual fellowship has the tree of sacrifice in the center of it. This is most powerfully expressed as we partake of the Passover of the New Covenant together, with profound love toward Yeshua and fervent love toward one another.

Two thousand years ago the standard was set for Messianic Jewish revival. It is still the standard for the 21st century. It is a standard worth emulating, worth striving for, worth fighting for and worth dying for!

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