

Standards for Messianic Jewish congregations and chavurot

We affirm the following:

There is one God, who has revealed Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Every divine action in the world is accomplished by the Father working through the Son and in the power of the Spirit. This God has revealed Himself in creation and in the history of Israel as transmitted in Scripture. (Gen. 1:1; I Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:4-6)

God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He created humanity in the divine image to serve as creation's priest and ruler. God's intention for creation involves an order of differentiation, interdependence, and mutual blessing. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15; Eph. 1:4-6)

Through the exercise of free will, human beings disobeyed God, tarnished the divine image, and abandoned their privileged vocation. As a result, God's consummating purpose for creation met with initial frustration, and all relationships within creation became subject to violence and disorder. (Gen. 4:8; 6:5-7; Rom. 8:20-22)

God chose Israel, the Jewish people, and entered into an everlasting covenant with them so they might be the firstfruits of a renewed humanity, who would mediate blessing and restoration to all the nations of the world. In gracious love, God gave to Israel the holy Torah as a covenantal way of life, and the holy Land of Israel as an inheritance and pledge of the blessing of the World to Come. (Gen. 12:1-3; Jer. 31:34-36, 35-37; Rom. 11:28-29)

In the fullness of time, the Divine Son became a human being—Yeshua the Messiah, born of a Jewish virgin, a true and perfect Israelite, a fitting representative and one-man embodiment of the entire nation. He lived as a holy *tzaddik*, fulfilling without blemish the *mitzvot* of the Torah. He brings to perfection the human expression of the divine image (Isa. 7:14; John 1:14; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 1:1-4; 4:15)

Yeshua died as an atonement for the sins of Israel and of the entire world. He was raised bodily from the dead, as the firstfruits of the resurrection promised to Israel as its glorification. He ascended to heaven and was there enthroned at God's right hand as Israel's Messiah, with

authority extending to the ends of creation. (Isa. 53:4-6; Ps. 110:1; Matt. 28:18; Mk. 14:61-62; I Cor. 15:3-8; Phil. 2:9-11)

God poured out the Divine Spirit on the community of Yeshua's followers, so that they might be joined intimately to the Messiah as His Body and become the preliminary representation of the New Covenant fullness promised to Israel. To this early Jewish community God added partners from among the nations, who heard the news of God's work in Yeshua and responded to the good news with faith. (Isa. 66:20-21; Acts 2:1-21; 10:44-48; 15:8-9; Eph. 1:13; 2:11-22)

Messiah's community is a single community expressed in diverse forms within the Jewish community and among the nations. All are called to a dedicated life of worship, neighborly service, and public testimony to Yeshua. Unity and love throughout the entire community confirm Yeshua's role, as the One sent by the Father, and God's purpose in Messiah for Israel and the Nations. (John 17:20-21; Acts 21:20; Gal. 2:7-8)

Spiritual life is grounded in godly family units within the relational framework of congregations, whereby persons are to be encouraged, trained, and disciplined. Families in Messianic Jewish congregations should be strengthened and established in their Jewish calling to covenant life. Messianic Jewish congregations are called to connect in Messianic Jewish associations, where they will find mutual enrichment and accountability. (Matt. 18:15-18; Gal. 6:1-2; Rom. 9:1-5; I Cor. 7:17-20)

The Torah is God's gift to Israel. It serves as the constitution of the Jewish people and thus also of the Messianic Jewish community, which comprises Israel's eschatological firstfruits. The Torah does not have the same role for Messianic communities from the nations, though it does provide spiritual nourishment as a witness to the Messiah. The Torah also provides universal norms of behavior and practical life teaching for all. The Torah is to be applied anew in every generation, and in this age as is fitting to the New Covenant order. (Matt. 5:17-20; II Tim. 3:16-17; I Cor. 7:17-20)

Forgiveness of sins, spiritual renewal, union with Messiah, the empowering and sanctifying presence of the indwelling *Ruach Ha Kodesh*, and the confident hope of eternal life and a glorious resurrection are now available to all, Jews and Gentiles, who put their faith in Yeshua, the Risen Lord, and in obedience to His word are joined to Him and His Body through immersion and sustained in that union through Messiah's remembrance meal. Yeshua is the Mediator between God and all creation, and no one can come to the Father except through

Him. (Matt. 28:19-20; Lk. 24:46-48; Jn. 14:6; Rom. 6:22, 23; I Cor. 11:23-27)

Messiah Yeshua will return to Jerusalem in glory at the end of this age, to rule forever on David's throne. He will effect the restoration of Israel in fullness, raise the dead, save all who belong to Him, judge the wicked not written in the Book of Life who are separated from His presence, and accomplish the final *Tikkun Olam* in which Israel and the nations will be united under Messiah's rule forever. This restoration will bring everlasting joy for those who belong to Him. They will live forever in an order of mutual blessing and fellowship with God, in a cosmos perfected beyond description. (Isa. 9:4-5/5-6; Rom. 8:18-19; Rev.20:11-15; 21:1-4)

The writings of Tanakh and Brit Hadasha are divinely inspired and fully trustworthy (true), a gift given by God to His people, provided to impart life and to form, nurture, and guide them in the ways of truth. They are of supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and practice. (II Tim. 3:16, 17; II Pet. 1:19-21)

The Jewish tradition serves as the living link that connects us as contemporary Jews to our biblical past and provides resources needed to develop a Messianic Jewish way of life and thought. Furthermore, the Christian theological tradition offers riches of insight into the revelation of the Messiah and His will, and Messianic Jews need to draw upon this wealth. (I Thess. 2:15, Rom. 13:7; Jude 3)

Approved unanimously by the delegates, Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations, July 19, 2012.