



Parasha Ki Tetze

September 10, 2022

Torah: Deuteronomy 21:10-25:19

Haftarah: Isaiah 54:1-10

Ketuvim Shlichim: Galatians 3:9-14

Shabbat shalom Mishpacha! Our *parasha*, *Ki Tetze*, means, “When you go,” and the verse continues “out to war against your enemies....” It covers a wide variety of topics with most of them only being active under the direct kingship of ADONAI and when there is a Tabernacle or a Temple. Today, ADONAI does not expect us to have the community stone our rebellious sons as commanded in this *parasha* (Deuteronomy 21:18-21). Well, maybe our rebellious congregants. We wouldn’t have nearly as many divisions and probably quite a few less congregations. ☺ But, there is a very important subject for today in this *parasha* and we have addressed it several times before. It is the “curse of the Law,” a subject greatly misunderstood by a large segment of Yeshua’s body. We will not discuss it today, but if you wish to review, the latest written message can be found on our website in *Parasha Ki Tetze*, August 21, 2021.

The topic that we will discuss today is also very important and begins with these verses from our *parasha*: 4 “No Ammonite or Moabite is to enter the community of Adonai—even to the tenth generation none belonging to them is to enter the community of Adonai forever— 5 because they did not meet you with bread and water on the way when you came out from Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam son of Beor from Petor of Aram-naharaim to curse you.” (Deuteronomy 23:4-5 TLV). We read that in our *Torah* Service today because our message has much to do with a certain Moabite person. Her name was *Rut*, Ruth in English. She became the wife of Boaz of the Tribe of Judah and more importantly, the great grandmother of King David and ancestor of Yeshua the Messiah. There must be another way to understand that “a Moabite may not enter the *qahal*,” קהל, the congregation of Israel, because ADONAI allowed her to enter. Not only did ADONAI allow Ruth into the congregation, but He had previously allowed in a Canaanite woman, *Rahav*, the mother of Boaz. His mother was a foreigner. Since The most obvious answer to allowing them to be a part of the congregation of Israel is that *Rut*, *Rahav* and even *Tziporah* the Midianite woman whom Moses married, must have trusted in ADONAI, the G-d of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They accepted His covenant and lived under its laws. Incidentally, the reason that Boaz married Ruth, other than the facts that he loved her and that the *Ruach* led him to do it, is also found in this *parasha*. It is the so-called “Levirate marriage,” in which a brother is charged to raise up children for a dead brother by marrying his widow. (Deuteronomy 25:5-10). Boaz raised up his son *Oved*, the grandfather of King David, for his deceased relative, Ruth’s first husband and in the sense of *Torah*, *Oved* was also the son of Mahlon who died childless.

We have previously studied Boaz and Ruth extensively as being the ancient pattern which foretold our Messiah’s redemption act for us. While, Boaz had to have a closer relative refuse the right of redemption in order to be the closest relative, Yeshua was already not only the closest, but also the only relative of the people of Israel qualified to redeem them. As Son of David, Yeshua was and is the *goel*, the redeemer of Israel. There are several categories in which being the *goel* can apply, but probably the most applicable with regard to Yeshua is

redemption from slavery. Leviticus 25 tells us that if an Israelite is sold into slavery: 48 “...after he is sold he may be redeemed. One of his brothers may redeem him,…” (Leviticus 25:48 TLV). Yeshua redeemed Israel from the slavery of sin and not only Israel, but the whole world, those who trust in His redemptive sacrifice. The closest redeemer to Ruth’s deceased husband removed his shoe and put it under his thigh, signifying that he had given up his redemptive right to Boaz.

When priests and Levites were sent from Jerusalem to question John who was immersing at the Jordan River, they asked him if he was the Messiah. He said “no.” Are you Elijah? He said “no.” Are you “the Prophet?” He again said “no.” Then they asked him why he was immersing if he was not one of those three: 26 “I immerse in water,” John answered. “Among you stands One you do not know, 27 coming after me, whose sandals I’m not worthy to untie.” (John 1:26-27 TLV). Speaking of Yeshua’s sandals was a reference to His being the *goel*, the Redeemer of Israel, the closest relative who could redeem His people. By his remark, John essentially said that he was not the *goel*, but that one standing among them that they did not know was the *goel*. Boaz and Ruth are a beautiful picture of what was to come, the redemption of Israel and the whole world, by their greatest descendant, Yeshua.

When we think of Boaz and Ruth, that is what we usually think of, their descendant Yeshua as *Goel* of Israel. That is the most important picture for us. But, I also see another picture in Boaz and Ruth, a picture of Messianic Judaism. They came together for a purpose, to carry out ADONAI’s will and we have no doubt that it was His will. In that way, Boaz is a picture of the “Boaz’s,” the Messianic Jews whom ADONAI has called into the Messianic Jewish Movement in these latter days to be witnesses to their brother and sister Jews of Messiah Yeshua. Ruth is a picture of the “Ruths,” the Messianic Gentiles whom ADONAI has also called to be a part of this last days ministry. And, He has also supernaturally created a bond of love between the Jews and Gentiles of the Movement, just as Boaz loved Ruth.

Today, there are both Jews and Gentiles in the Church whom ADONAI is calling to come and be a part of Messianic Judaism. While some Gentiles are called to Messianic Judaism, some are not and are called to be a part of the Church. This is directed to those whom ADONAI is calling to be a part of *Beit Shalom Messianic Synagogue* or a part of any of the other Messianic Jewish congregations of the Movement. It is very important that the people of the Church understand the Messianic Jewish Movement. Understanding it will help them to realize that it is an authentic move of G-d, a move which is a vital part of the last days before Yeshua’s return. I ask the question, “Are You A Ruth or a Boaz?” The Ruth’s are Gentiles, both male and female, and the Boaz’s are Jews, both male and female, whom ADONAI has called to Messianic Judaism. That question can only individually be answered by a witness to the individual from G-d’s Holy Spirit. The answer can be yes for both Jews and Gentiles, but the answer can also be no if a person is called to be a part of the Church. The majority of Yeshua’s followers are called to the Church and few are called to Messianic Judaism, but, each of us should want to be where ADONAI wants us to be. Leaders of congregations must seek to help their congregants find where G-d wants them to be and stop being jealous of their sheep. As leaders, we should only want those sheep which ADONAI has intended for us. When we are truly guided by the Holy Spirit, we will leave behind our soulish possessiveness of our congregants. Since there are 2.3 billion more Christians than the total of Jews and Gentiles in Messianic Judaism, the Church would not miss a few whom ADONAI calls to Messianic Judaism.

And, there is a real need for Gentiles to become a part of Messianic Judaism. Messianic Jews are a very small group and they cannot do it alone. They need help. Because the number of Jews in the Messianic Jewish Movement today is small, ADONAI has called some Messianic Gentiles to be “Ruth’s,” those who have joined themselves to Israel with a very special bond. But, not every Gentile who is a follower of Jesus is called to be a Ruth as a part of Messianic Judaism and not every Jew who is a follower of Jesus is called to be a Boaz, a Jewish follower of *Yeshua* in Messianic Judaism. Most Gentile followers of *Yeshua* are called to the Church and some Jewish followers of *Yeshua* are also called to be a part of the Church. That’s just the way it is.

I believe that Scripture teaches that every follower of *Yeshua* is called to be in one place or the other, either in the Church or in Messianic Judaism and under proper spiritual authority in whichever place they are called to be. There should be no “Lone Ranger” followers of *Yeshua*. The same is true of the leaders; everyone must be under an overseeing spiritual authority. When we are properly aligned, it will then be through the organizational connectivity of these different expressions of *Yeshua*’s body that G-d will eventually bring the whole body of Messiah to be “without spot or wrinkle.”

Messianic Judaism is an important move of G-d today, a movement which in the understanding of some, is a restoration of 1st century Messianic Judaism, a restoration with a specific purpose, the purpose of helping to bring about “the salvation of all Israel as described in Romans 11:25-27. But, the most important thing in Messianic Judaism is having a “Jewish Messiah!” And both Christians and Messianics do have a Jewish Messiah, *Yeshua*. Everything about Him is Jewish. He is our Jewish Messiah because a Hebrew man, *Avram*, had the faith to answer ADONAI’s call to leave his country and to go to a place that He would show him. ADONAI said to *Avram*: *1 , “Get going out from your land, and from your relatives, and from your father’s house, to the land that I will show you. 2 My heart’s desire is to make you into a great nation, to bless you, to make your name great so that you may be a blessing. 3 My desire is to bless those who bless you, but whoever curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed”* (Genesis 12:1-3 TLV). *Avram* the Aramean from Mesopotamia was to become the father of a new group of peoples, a group through whom ADONAI would bless all the nations of the earth.

This blessing for all the families of the earth was to come from a very small group of people. And today, they remain a very small group, a group that was chosen not for their size, but because of ADONAI’s love for them. Moses said: *7 “It is not because you are more numerous than all the peoples that Adonai set His love on you and chose you—for you are the least of all peoples. 8 Rather, because of His love for you and His keeping the oath He swore to your fathers,....* (Deuteronomy 7:7-8a TLV). Still a very small group today, the Jews are approximately .2 of 1%, .002 of the total world’s population. That’s 1 Jew in every 1,053 people, in other words, over one thousand times more Gentiles than Jews. But ADONAI’s plan is to bless all of the almost 7.8 billion Gentiles on the planet today though this very small group.

And, the world has already been blessed by the Jews. You only have to look at events of the modern world to understand. Over 22% of the Nobel prizes given since their inception in 1901 were given to Jews or those of Jewish descent. A people group which is only .002 of the world’s population received 22% of the Nobel awards! Look at medicine, arts and entertainment. These fields are heavily populated by Jews. Look at the developments coming out of the nation of Israel today in science, medicine and technology. ADONAI has blessed

the world through Abraham's descendants in many ways and continues to do so daily. But the greatest blessing which came through Abraham is his descendant *Yeshua* from the Tribe of Judah. Through the son of *Miryam*, the adopted son of *Yosef*, all the people of the earth can have forgiveness of their sins and the promise of eternal life. *Yeshua*, the Son of G-d who was made flesh, was the greatest blessing which came from the children of Abraham. Salvation became available to all the people of the earth through the Jew, *Yeshua*! He said to the Samaritan woman: 22 "*You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.*" (John 4:22b TLV)! That was the ultimate purpose of ADONAI's calling of the Jewish people to be priests to the nations. At ADONAI's appointed time, His Son *Yeshua* became the High Priest of Israel, a *kohen* after the order of *Malkitzedek*, the Savior of the world.

Who is a Jew and why do we need to know? Who is considered a Jew today is determined by Jews themselves. They determine the *halacha*. *Halacha* comes from the Hebrew word *halak*, and means "how we are to walk." This refers to how we are to walk spiritually, that is, how Scripture is interpreted by a particular Jewish group. In traditional Judaism, the ancient definition is that a Jew is the child of a Jewish woman. Today, it has been relaxed in many cases to also include the child of a Jewish man. These standards have been set by the Jewish people themselves. Early in the founding of the Messianic Jewish Movement, Messianic Jews also made a determination of "who is a Jew." In Messianic Judaism, you are a Jew if you have either parent or a grandparent who is or was identified as a Jew. The Jews themselves are the only ones who can make this determination, that is, set the *halacha* for Jews. No one else can. But, the bottom line is that you don't have to have any Jewish DNA to be called to be a part of Messianic Judaism. You just need to be called by ADONAI's *Ruach*. And the majority of those in Messianic Judaism today are not Jewish, but Gentile.

I, a Gentile, have been called by ADONAI into a Jewish ministry. The example for me and the other Gentiles in Messianic Judaism, is *Yeshua's* Gentile ancestor Ruth. Ruth was a Moabite, but she followed the calling of ADONAI's Spirit and left her native country to go to the Land of Israel. Her mother in law Naomi pleaded for her to return to her own country, but Ruth replied: 16, "*Do not plead with me to abandon you, to turn back from following you. For where you go, I will go, and where you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people, and your God my God*" (Ruth 1:16 TLV). "*Your people will be my people, and your God my God.*" While all followers of *Yeshua*, both those in the Church and those in Messianic Judaism, have said "your G-d will be my G-d," Messianic Gentiles have gone a step further. Messianic Gentiles have said "your people will be my people." The Gentiles in *Beit Shalom* understand this. This is a calling from ADONAI. And, this congregation is mostly Gentile, primarily a congregation of Ruth's, Gentiles who have heard ADONAI's voice and responded to it. And, being a Ruth in the Messianic Jewish Movement is an important calling. No one knows the exact percentage of Gentiles in the Messianic Jewish Movement, but we can estimate that the worldwide Messianic Jewish Movement is at least 75% or more Gentile, probably more. These Gentiles worldwide have been called by ADONAI to stand alongside and to minister with the ethnically Jewish followers of *Yeshua* in this end-time movement which He has re-established in the end of the age.

The Messianic Jewish Movement, itself, is miraculously and divinely formed. In my opinion, it is a resurrection of the ministry of the ethnic Messianic Jews who followed *Yeshua* in the 1st century, the Messianic Judaism of that day which was similarly joined by Gentiles. It is a movement which ADONAI rebirthed almost 2000 years after it faded from history. And,

it was from The Jesus Movement Revival of the mid-1960s that modern Messianic Judaism was reborn; born again. Young Jews, many of them hippies, were born again and began to worship together, eventually leading to the formation of Messianic Judaism. And born again is a very prophetic way of understanding Messianic Judaism. It is life from the dead. Life again of a body which disappeared from history by the 4th century CE.

Another important fact about the Modern Messianic Jewish Movement is that the seeds of this modern movement were planted during a time after Israel had become a nation once again, itself reborn, after not having been a nation for over 2000 years. Over 2,600 years earlier, Isaiah had prophesied that this would happen. He said: *8 Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Can a land be born in one day? Can a nation be brought forth at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, she gave birth to her children* (Isaiah 66:8 TLV). And on May 14, 1948, David Ben Gurion, who would become the first prime minister, proclaimed Israel to be a nation. And, Zion gave birth to her children, those who came to her from the horrors of the Holocaust and from other parts of the world where they had been scattered. And, some 19 years after the miraculous re-establishment of a nation which itself had been dead for so many years, Messianic Judaism was reborn in 1967.

In the beginnings of Messianic Judaism in 1967, Israel was a very young nation, only 19 years old. In the year that Messianic Judaism was reborn, there was another very significant event which also took place. It was a fulfillment of prophecy, a prophecy spoken by Messiah *Yeshua*, Himself. Just hours before He went to the stake for our sins, *Yeshua* sat on the Mount of Olives and made a number of prophetic statements. Speaking about His people, the Jews, He said: *24 "They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away captive into all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled"* (Luke 21:24 TLV). *Yeshua's* prophecy has three parts, (1) a beginning, (2) the event which was to occur, and (3) the end or fulfillment. The beginning was (1): "fall by the sword and be led away captive into all the nations." This occurred in the year 70 CE as the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, killing and capturing many Jews, with those captured being taken into slavery. The event about which *Yeshua* was speaking, was (2): "Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles." Other Bible versions say "trodden underfoot," but both mean: "Jerusalem will be under the control of Gentile nations." And, Jerusalem continued to be under Gentile domination for the next 1,900 years. The fulfillment of *Yeshua's* prophecy is, (3): "until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." In this, He referred to the future time when Gentiles will no longer control the city of Jerusalem. And, Jerusalem did continue to be under the control of Gentiles, that is, until the "times of the Gentiles" were fulfilled on June 7, 1967. That was the day when the Israeli Defense Forces captured and controlled Jerusalem. The "times of the Gentiles have been fulfilled because "Jerusalem is no longer trodden underfoot; no longer under the control of Gentiles." This event prophesied by *Yeshua* was fulfilled on June 7, 1967 and has now been fulfilled for 55 years.

So, for whatever it means, Jerusalem is no longer in the "times of the Gentiles," but is now "in the times of the Jews," because Jerusalem is under Jewish control. After thousands of years of being dispersed among the nations, the descendants of Abraham are once again in control of the capital city of the nation of Israel, the nation which *ADONAI* promised to them. Jews now control the place where *ADONAI* has placed His name. Solomon recounted what *ADONAI* had said to his father David: *6 "But I have chosen Jerusalem that My Name would abide there and I have chosen David to be over My people Israel"* (2Chronicles 6:6 TLV). The "times of the Gentiles" had to end in order for prophecy to be fulfilled. When *Yeshua*, Son of David returns, He will return to rule and reign in Jerusalem, a Jewish city.

Under the present conditions of Israel and Jerusalem under Jewish control, the final part of the blessing which *ADONAI* promised to the Nations through Abraham can also now be fulfilled. It is the return of *Yeshua* to Israel, returning not as “the suffering servant who died for our sins,” but as the “the conquering and ruling king” who will conquer His enemies, and bring eternal peace to the Nations. We don’t know when this will happen and we set no dates. But, we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that we are in the closing years of the *olam hazeh*, this present world, and are nearing the coming of the *olam habah*, the world to come, when *Yeshua* will return to rule and to reign.

And all of this has been done through the Jews for the benefit and blessing of the Gentiles. It was *ADONAI*’s plan from the beginning. It was our Creator’s plan from before the foundation of the earth to use Abraham’s descendants to bring blessing to all the nations of the earth. In Genesis 12:3, speaking of Abraham, *ADONAI* said: “in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.” The major part of this blessing would eventually be shown to be the gift of eternal life through *Yeshua*, son of Abraham. This would come about through *ADONAI*’s chosen nation Israel, a nation from which our Messiah would be born. And, through our Messiah *Yeshua*, the two groups, Jew and Gentile, have become one.

Sha’ul devised a unique symbol to describe the joining of these two groups. It was the olive tree, something which *ADONAI* Himself, spoke about through the prophets to describe the Nation of Israel. (Jeremiah 11:16-17 and Hosea 5:14-17). *Sha’ul* used the olive tree as a metaphor to describe the joining of the two groups of peoples into one, branches from which fruit grew. The branches of the tree represent individual people. *Sha’ul* used the natural branches to represent Israel in the flesh, the Jews. The natural branches who were on the tree, the Jews who did not accept *Yeshua*, were broken off for unbelief because they rejected a relationship with the Messiah of Israel. But, they can be grafted back in when they trust in Him, grafted back in as the firstfruits of the salvation of all Israel. Speaking to Gentiles regarding the tree, *Sha’ul* said: *17 But if some of the branches were broken off and you—being a wild olive—were grafted in among them and became a partaker of the root of the olive tree with its richness,...* (Romans 11:17a TLV). *Sha’ul*’s mystery of the Gospel, Jew and Gentile, one in Messiah, is pictured on this tree. Gentiles, the branches of a wild olive tree, can through *Yeshua*, be grafted into Israel. And, it is important for all of us to understand that the Olive Tree is a Jewish tree. In *Sha’ul*’s metaphor, it is growing from the root of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the other fathers of Israel. But, G-d, Himself, is the gardener. He is the One who has tended this tree through the centuries; tended it in order to carry out His plan to bless all mankind through Abraham and his descendants.

Sha’ul’s metaphor was about grafting. Did he choose this metaphor on his own or did *ADONAI* imply “grafting” when He made the promise to bless the nations through Abraham? Here is a different slant on the phrase, *18 ...“and by you all the Nations of the earth will be blessed”* in Genesis 22:18 TLV). The Hebrew word *v’nivrechu* in this phrase is usually translated blessed, but it can also have another meaning. *V’nivrechu* is derived from the Hebrew infinitive *mavrich*, which means, “to graft.” So, while *ADONAI*’s intention was to bless the Gentiles with salvation through Abraham’s descendant *Yeshua*, it also becomes apparent that His plan was to bless them by grafting them through that salvation into His covenant nation, Israel. Israel is the entity through which *ADONAI* operates on the earth. All of His covenants, including the New Covenant, are with Israel. Gentiles who trust *Yeshua* become covenant partners of the nation of Israel.

The Olive Tree of Israel is today composed of both native and wild olive branches. The native branches are the first-fruits of the salvation of all Israel, Messianic Jews, Jews who have trusted *Yeshua*. The wild olive branches are all of the Gentiles who have trusted *Yeshua*, both in the Church and in Messianic Judaism. And together, the followers of *Yeshua*, both native and wild branches, His body, make up the Commonwealth of Israel. *Sha'ul* spoke about this in his letter to the Ephesians. He said: *11 Therefore, keep in mind that once you—Gentiles in the flesh—were called “uncircumcision” by those called “circumcision” (which is performed on flesh by hand). 12 At that time you were separate from Messiah, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Messiah Yeshua, you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of the Messiah.* (Ephesians 2:11-13 TLV). All of us who have trusted *Yeshua* are not only a part of His body, His *ecclesia*, His congregation, but also citizens of the commonwealth of Israel.

By understanding the nature of a commonwealth, we can understand the makeup of Israel. The definition of a modern commonwealth is: “a group of countries or states that have political or economic connections with one another.” The British Commonwealth is a good example. England, Canada Australia and a number of smaller nations and entities make up the British Commonwealth. The Commonwealth of Israel is similar, being made up of two groups of people, Jews and Gentiles. *Sha'ul* said: *12 At that time you were separate from Messiah, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.* (TLV). We, Gentiles who have entered the covenants of promise, do not change into something else when we come to *Yeshua* and become parts of the Commonwealth. We remain Gentiles. And Jews remain Jews. But, even though there are two groups, there is only one body. *Sha'ul* said: *4 There is one body and one Ruach, just as you also were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one immersion; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all* (Ephesians 4:4-6 TLV). So, while Jews who trust *Yeshua* don't become Gentiles and Gentiles who trust *Yeshua* don't become Jews, each does change. Each changes by becoming “one in Messiah,” *Sha'ul's* “one new man” of Ephesians. Speaking of the Gentiles, *Sha'ul* said: *13 But now in Messiah Yeshua, you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of the Messiah. 14 For He is our shalom, the One who made the two into one and broke down the middle wall of separation.* (Ephesians 2:13-14a TLV). The TLV says “made the two into one.” Other versions say “created in Himself one new humanity” or “created one new man.” Each of these is a way of saying that *Yeshua*, through His death on the stake has made the two separate bodies, Jews and Gentiles, into one spiritual body. And, that new spiritual body is neither the Church nor Messianic Judaism. It is the *ecclesia*, a more inclusive entity. The *ecclesia* is the assembly, the body of *Yeshua's* “called out ones,” corporate Israel. The “one new man” is a way of referring to this unified spiritual body, unified in love and calling, but remaining individually as ADONAI originally made us. And through His Spirit we are “one.” But we must not be “one” in name only. G-d's desire is that all of us who are in His Commonwealth would be “one in His Spirit” and that the divisions which we now have would disappear. This is one of the greatest challenges to the Body of Messiah today. Think of the spiritual power which *Yeshua's* body will have when it really becomes “one.” There would be no evangelism problems; the unsaved would literally rush to seek the “G-d” which they would see in us.

Within the Body of Messiah today, *Yeshua's* *ecclesia*, there are two distinct groups, the Church and Messianic Judaism. One is not better than the other and there is no competition between the two groups. Spiritually, we are united. The primary difference is

purpose. A major purpose of the Church is to take the Gospel, the Good News of Messiah Yeshua, to all people, Jew and Gentile. The same is true of Messianic Judaism, but ADONAI has also given the burden to those in it to specifically pray for and minister to the Jews of the world. Yes, of course, we in Messianic Judaism are concerned for and pray for the salvation of Gentiles just as the Church is concerned for the salvation of Jews. But, truthfully, the Church focuses on the salvation of Gentiles and Messianic Judaism focuses on the salvation of Jews. Let there be no mistake. There is no competition between the two groups. We are one in Messiah, *echad* in Hebrew. Just as the Father and the Son are *echad*, one, so too is Yeshua's body. We are *echad*, one in the *Ruach Kodesh*, the Holy Spirit, united by love.

Both of these groups must learn about the other and learn to trust each other. Especially in these last days, days in which *HaSatan* is scoring major victories in our nation. My prayer is that the Church will understand that Messianic Judaism, a movement called by G-d, is not in competition with them. In relation to equality and importance, it is also necessary to beware of "spiritual pride." We must be careful not to believe that "our group is the most important." And, neither group can have spiritual pride if we as a unified body are to be successful in carrying out G-d's plan. Even right now, there is some misunderstanding and distrust among us. Between Christian groups it may relate to doctrinal differences. Between the Church and Messianic Judaism it can also be because of doctrinal differences and also because of a lack of knowledge about the mission of Messianic Judaism. Gentiles who are called to walk with Jews in Messianic Judaism are different in belief and practice from the Church. But we have not been called to place our vision and calling upon the Church. Each group, those within the Church and also Messianic Judaism, must seek G-d for their own way of understanding and carrying out Scripture. We can best understand this through the Jewish concept of "*halacha*."

Halacha, as said a moment ago, is the way that we walk spiritually. That is, it is how we interpret and carry out Scriptural commands. This authority has been given to each group by Yeshua. *13 When Yeshua came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" 14 They answered, "Some say John the Immerser, others say Elijah, and still others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets." 15 He said, "But who do you say I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." 17 Yeshua said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven! 18 And I also tell you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My community; and the gates of Sheol will not overpower it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will have been forbidden in heaven and what you permit on earth will have been permitted in heaven"* (Matthew 16:13-19 TLV). "Forbidding and permitting" or "binding and loosing" is authority given by Yeshua to His followers. "Binding and loosing" was not something new. It was something which Yeshua's disciples would have understood because the rabbis of that day already used this understanding. Binding and loosing was about congregational authority to interpret Scripture and make decisions for the body. The modern leadership of the Church and of Messianic Judaism and all the entities within each has Yeshua's authority to make *halacha* for their group, the keys to His Kingdom. Neither group has authority over the other. I can speak for our small group. It is not our purpose to encourage the Church to worship on Saturday or to not eat pork or shellfish. We understand that Yeshua has given Church leaders the right to make their spiritual decisions. And, each group must respect the spiritual choices of their fellow members of our Messiah's body. May there be a beginning of understanding, even today, which will lead to increased opportunity

for dialogue which will lead to even greater understanding. Greater understanding will lead to greater cooperation and greater unity.

This brings us back to “calling.” Understanding that we have the two groups, we can also understand that *ADONAI* calls some to one group and some to the other. He has called some Jews and Gentiles to be a part of the Church and He has called some Jews and Gentiles to be a part of Messianic Judaism. The Church is approximately 2.3 billion individuals while Messianic Judaism is today possibly 40,000 individuals at best. Messianic Judaism will always be the smaller body. It is my prayer that those in the Church would not resent the small number of those in the Church who follow G-d’s calling to be a part of Messianic Judaism. Each body is equally important, and both the Church and Messianic Judaism will continue to exist to fulfill their respective purposes until *Yeshua* returns. At that time, our divisions will no longer be needed and He will unify us into one glorious body without spot or wrinkle.

“Are You A Ruth Or A Boaz?” Most of us in *Beit Shalom* are Ruth’s; both male and female. This Messianic Jewish congregation is mostly Gentile. Those who are Gentile have answered *ADONAI*’s call in their hearts to join with His people, Israel, the Jews. We have said in our spirits, “Your people will be my people, and your G-d my G-d.” Only a few in our group are Boaz’s, born Jews. But, the same calling relationship is there with them. Boaz loved Ruth and took her into his heart and his family. The Boaz Jews are called by the Spirit of G-d to be a part of Messianic Judaism and to join with the Gentile Ruth’s. We must continue to emphasize that no matter where individuals are called, there is no competition between Messianic Judaism and the Church. Each group has a specific job to do. Let us love each other and support each other as we each follow our specific callings from G-d. Messianic Judaism is not yet a complete group. There are still many Jews and Gentiles out there whom *ADONAI* is calling to be a part of His end-time movement. My prayer is that those whom the Holy Spirit is calling to be a part of *Beit Shalom* or to other congregations of Messianic Judaism, will find their way to where they’re being called. And together we will walk out our part of *ADONAI*’s plan for the nations as we join with the Church in ushering Messiah *Yeshua* back to claim His kingdom. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you if you are one who is being called to be a part of Messianic Judaism. *Shabbat shalom!*