



Parasha Ki Tisa

March 7, 2026

Torah: Exodus 30:11-34:35

Haftarah: 1 Kings 18:1-39

Ketuvim Shlichim: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Messianic Judaism 30-2026 CE

#3: Who, what, and where?

Shabbat shalom, Mishpacha. Why are we here today? The answer is the same as it was in 2002 when we first assembled as a congregation. Each of us came because we felt ADONAI's call in our spirits, a call leading us into unknown waters, but a strong spiritual call to leave where we were and follow Yeshua. As a congregation, we have continued with this calling over the years, and we are more confident today that we made the right decision. The Book of Hebrews, chapter 11, describes those who persisted by faith: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets. Many more are described in this hall of faith, but are not listed. I must believe that Ruth the Moabitess was one of them. Our situations are similar, and what we did as an initial group of Gentile Christians entering Messianic Judaism is somewhat comparable. While our faith in becoming a part of Messianic Judaism is puny compared with Ruth and these other giants of faith, it did take faith, and faith has been required to continue.

Our personal examples of Ruth and Boaz are not listed in this "Hall of Faith," but I have no doubt they are there. Their story, as the ancestors of King David and Messiah Yeshua, is very familiar to us. Ruth was a Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, an Israelite from Bethlehem, but after his death in Moab, she refused to leave her mother-in-law, Naomi, and returned to Bethlehem and Israel with her. There she eventually met Boaz and became his wife. Why did Ruth leave her own country and go to Israel? The answer must be faith, the same kind of faith that Abraham and all the others had. Her faith and the calling she had from ADONAI, caused her to say to Naomi: 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 1:16b TLV). While we didn't realize it then, ADONAI was asking us, "Are you, like Ruth, willing to follow My leading?" He sparked within our spirits the question, "Are you willing to leave your current place and be part of Messianic Judaism, something relatively unknown in the Body of Messiah today?" In spirit, we answered הִנְנִי *heneni*, "Here I am," signifying our obedience to His call.

When we first formed as a congregation, there were no Jews in our group, and we were waiting to be accepted into the International Alliance of Messianic Congregations and Synagogues of the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America. I had not yet been ordained by them, although I had applied, and just a few months later, I, a Gentile, received my סמיכה *s'mikhah* (ordination), the "laying on of hands," as a Congregational Leader. And the question persists today to Gentiles all over the world, "Are you a Ruth?" That calling still applies to

all the Gentiles around the world if they have trusted in Jesus, no matter where they live or their ethnicity. No matter their original ethnicity, every Christian is just like "Ruth," in that they have said, "Your G-d will be my G-d." They have trusted in Jesus as their Savior and become a part of ADONAI's New Covenant. It's important for them because it's a significant calling that ADONAI has given them, a powerful movement—ADONAI's biggest—in His plan for the world.

His question to those of us being called into Messianic Judaism addressed the second part of Ruth's statement to Naomi: "Your people shall be my people." While we haven't left our families and friends behind, we have taken on a new family, the Messianic Jews of our Movement, and all the Jews of the world. The Messianic Jews and Messianic Gentiles of *Beit Shalom* are part of Messianic Judaism together. And the Jews of the Messianic Jewish Movement also have a unique calling. They are called to be "Boaz's," modern counterparts of the Israelite who went beyond expected norms and embraced a Moabite woman because of the faith ADONAI had given him to accept her. As "Boazs," they accept us Gentiles into their movement because of the faith ADONAI has given them, receiving us as משפחה *mishpacha*, family.

This applies to all who have taken on the calling to be part of not only *Beit Shalom* but also the broader Messianic Judaism, which includes many Messianic Jewish congregations around the world. These words also serve as a message for those whom ADONAI is calling to come and join *Beit Shalom* or any other Messianic Jewish congregations. This is a message that both Messianic Jews and Messianic Gentiles must take to heart. Both "Boazs" and "Ruths" are necessary for the success of ADONAI's plan for the Messianic Jewish Movement. Messianic Jews who began this movement were a small group and could not do it alone; ADONAI has called Gentiles to be part of their movement. But not every Gentile follower of Yeshua is called to be a Ruth, and not every Jew who has trusted in Yeshua is called to be a Boaz. Some Gentile followers of Yeshua are called to be a part of the Church, and some Jewish followers of Yeshua are also called to the Church. ADONAI calls us where He wants us. Messianic Judaism is not in competition with the Church but works alongside it to fulfill ADONAI's plans for the world and the return of Messiah Yeshua to rule and reign on the earth.

Messianic Judaism is not new, but a much older movement that has reemerged after two thousand years of silence. What is Messianic Judaism? I believe that our modern Messianic Judaism reflects the Judaism of Yeshua and His Jewish and Gentile followers of the first century, an approach that ADONAI wanted to highlight once more. It is the Judaism that Yeshua taught and His Jewish and Gentile disciples of the 1st century practiced. The belief system of modern Messianic Judaism is essentially the Judaism of Yeshua and His early disciples brought back, but now without the Temple. Remarkably, the modern movement began to take shape as Yeshua's prophecy about Jerusalem came true. He spoke of the distant future when 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). During Israel's Six-Day War on June 7, 1967, Jerusalem was no longer under Gentile control after 2,000 years. At the same time, a world away in California, a significant movement was taking place. Young Hippies in the "Jesus Movement" were being led to leave their vagabond lifestyle and to trust in Jesus, and it spread across the United States. In the east, some who had trusted were young Jews, and their involvement led to Bible studies and eventually Messianic Jewish congregations, all this developing at about the same time Israel had recaptured Jerusalem and was no longer

"trodden underfoot," or controlled by Gentiles. Both of these events marked a significant change and the coming of something new.

To understand what is present today in religion, we must look back at our history. We find that after the 1st century, some of Yeshua's Gentile followers began to alter key aspects of the faith practiced by Yeshua's Jewish disciples. As mentioned, our current Messianic belief system is basically the Judaism of Yeshua and His early disciples, but now without the Temple. We have come to understand that the *Torah* has not been abolished and remains active for followers of Yeshua, and modern Messianic Judaism reaffirms Yeshua's original intention. This directly relates to our understanding that "the *Torah*," meaning "teaching and instruction," is our prime directive from ADONAI. Simply put, we are to obey the *Torah's* commands wherever they are found in the Bible. The Bible clearly states that and has no bias against *Torah* obedience. While Genesis through Deuteronomy is *Torah* in its initial form, *Torah* is now found throughout the canonized Christian Bible, Genesis through Revelation. Yeshua's disciples faithfully followed the *Torah* of Moses regarding the Temple while it was standing, but not the entire *Torah* after its destruction. That was for two reasons: 1. There was no Temple or priesthood to enable certain commands, and 2. They now had a new High Priest, Yeshua. Even though Yeshua had become High Priest following His death on the cross forty years earlier, His disciples continued to attend the Temple and, in one case, even paid for sacrifices to be offered. (*Sha'ul*; Acts 21:24). This was because they considered ADONAI's commands uppermost. However, in the year 70, the Temple was destroyed, and the Levitical priesthood was dispersed. Today, we are to obey the *Torah* commands from Genesis through Deuteronomy that do not depend on the Temple or Levitical priesthood just as readily as we obey the commands of Yeshua Himself. This is because Yeshua said: 18 "Amen, I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or serif shall ever pass away from the *Torah* until all things come to pass." (Matthew 5:18 TLV). While all of the commands of the *Torah* and Prophets are still in the book, some can't be carried out today. Yet, we continue to obey ADONAI's commands, which can be obeyed without the requirement of the Temple or the Levitical priesthood. Yeshua obeyed all of them, and He is our perfect example. He did not fulfill them to eliminate His followers' need to obey, as some have said.

Some years ago, a movement among Jesus's followers used the slogan WWJD, meaning "What would Jesus do?" Not all of the necessary questions were asked of Him. No one asked if He would eat a pork chop or shellfish or which was the Sabbath Day. A better campaign slogan would be WWYD: "What would Yeshua do?" We know the answer. He would eat kosher and keep the seventh-day Sabbath. He has never changed. ADONAI says: 6 "For I am Adonai. I do not change, so you, children of Jacob, are not consumed." (Malachi 3:6 TLV).

To whom are we directing our study of Messianic Judaism? It is to those already in Messianic Judaism and to those whom ADONAI is calling to Messianic Judaism. While we welcome interactions with our brothers and sisters in the Church, we are not called to engage with them on anything other than what we already agree on. If they ask questions, we should answer, but our instruction is only directed to those who choose to come to us. Our congregation is but a tiny part of Messianic Judaism, itself a very small part of Yeshua's wider body, His Ecclesia, His worldwide community of followers. As Messianic followers of Yeshua, we firmly believe our teachings reflect true Biblical faith, but we have not been called to teach them to the Church. Why? We will answer next *Shabbat*, when we will discuss why the Church must determine its own teachings. However, we believe that Messianic Judaism is called to teach those within Rabbinic and other traditional Judaisms, and this teaching is a key purpose of ADONAI's re-establishment of our Movement after two thousand years. I

humbly point out that Messianic Judaism is “the elder brother” of the two, having been born more than forty years before Rabbinic Judaism, a movement which was not begun until after the Temple was destroyed. As the elder brother, Messianic Judaism continues to care for and reach out to our brothers and sisters in the other Judaisms. Our greatest prayer is that they will come to understand that the *Torah* still requires blood to cover sin, and that will lead them to know their *Goel Yisra’el*, their Kinsman Redeemer, Yeshua. ADONAI said: 11 “*For the life of the creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your lives—for it is the blood that makes atonement because of the life.*” (Leviticus 17:11 TLV). ADONAI said, “I do not change,” and the shedding of blood is still required to be in covenant with Him. Today, Yeshua’s blood is the only blood that ADONAI approves for atonement.

What is Messianic Judaism? Simply, it is the branch of Judaism under the rulership of King Yeshua, our Messiah. This faith began with Yeshua’s disciples in the 1st century and has continued through the centuries with the believers who followed them. During His time with His disciples and for the first eight or ten years after His death on the cross, the Messianic group was composed of only Jews, born Jews, and former Gentile proselytes to Judaism, until Cornelius and his group joined it. Yeshua’s movement continued under Jewish leadership until the early 2nd century, when Gentiles began to outnumber Jews and took over the leadership, changing some of its precepts.

We view the name of the Messianic Scriptures a little differently, the Scriptures that the Church calls “the New Testament” or “the New Covenant.” That is their prerogative, but in our congregation, we prefer to call these writings *Ketuvim Shlichim*, the writings of Yeshua’s *Shlichim*, His Apostles. When we speak of the *B’rit Chadasha*, the New Covenant, we mean the actual covenant cut by Yeshua on the cross, ADONAI’s active redemptive covenant today, rather than the Scriptures from Matthew through Revelation.

Sha’ul (Paul) wrote a major portion of the *Ketuvim Shlichim* and is a primary source of information for our congregational faith. All Jews, both then and now, have two names, one in Hebrew and one in the language of the nation where they live. While his Hebrew name, *Sha’ul*, was given to him at his *B’rit Milah* when he was circumcised at eight days of age, as a Roman citizen, he was also given the Latin name Paulus. We view him as the Messianic Jew that he was, and refer to him by his Hebrew name.

He wrote: 16 *For I am not ashamed of the Good News, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who trusts—to the Jew first and also to the Greek.* (Romans 1:16 TLV). The Good News, *Besurat HaGuelah*, is more completely described as *Besurat HaGeulah HaMalchut shel Yeshua HaMashiach*, the Good News of the Kingdom of Yeshua the Messiah. It’s not just about getting saved, but that is an essential first step. It’s also about becoming part of His Kingdom while on earth and about our relationship with eternity. *Mashiach* means “anointed.” Yeshua is our anointed Savior and King. The Good News, the Gospel, is about Yeshua’s Kingdom, both in heaven and on earth. This verse about the Good News means that the Good News part of it, the truth that Yeshua is G-d’s only begotten Son who is the only way to eternal life, was given first to G-d’s chosen people, the Jews. It is given equally to the Gentiles but comes to them through the Jews. Speaking to the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well, Yeshua said: 22 “*You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.*” (John 4:22 TLV). But the Good News is much more than salvation. It is the revelation of the total and complete gift of G-d, both here on earth, in heaven, and ultimately, in the world to come on the new earth, where we will reign

with our Messiah Yeshua for eternity. *Sha'ul* wrote that the Good News was intended for the Jew first, but why? It's because the New Covenant was made with the Jews. Read Jeremiah 31:30, and you will find that ADONAI planned to establish His New Covenant with the whole house of Israel, all the tribes, a subject we will address further, later. But also, in the progression of the spiritual events of the 1st century, the Jews were the first ones saved under the New Covenant.

How are we to worship ADONAI? We hear these words of Yeshua: 24 *“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”* (John 4:22 TLV). Yes, of course, we worship Him in spirit, but we also worship ADONAI in physical ways. We worship Him as covenant members responsible for covenant loyalty, through obedience to the *Torah*, through our praise and worship, and through the good works we do in the world. But that is only a part of how we worship Him. Because G-d is Spirit, our basis of relationship with Him must be spirit to spirit, G-d's *Ruach*, His Spirit, to man's spirit. This spiritual relationship can only come through a relationship with His Son, Yeshua. Once that relationship is established and His Spirit dwells in us, we worship ADONAI through understanding the truth of His Word, the *Torah*, which is revealed in the Bible from Genesis in the *Torah* of Moses through the Revelation of *Yochanan* (John). *Torah* means “teaching and instruction” and teaches us how flesh and blood can serve a holy, supernatural G-d. Every book of the Bible is anointed truth written by Jewish authors inspired by ADONAI.

There are more reasons why the Good News is to the Jew first. To begin with, the Jews are a “chosen people,” chosen by ADONAI to be His instrument for revealing Himself to the Nations. Messiah Yeshua is a Jew, not was, but is a Jew. He had to be a Jew and, second, a descendant of King David to be the *Goel*, the Kinsman Redeemer. It was to His kinsmen that Yeshua first revealed the Gospel. *Sha'ul* asked this question: 1 *Then what is the advantage of being Jewish? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?* (Romans 3:1 TLV). The two phrases in this verse are an example of Jewish parallelism; both convey the same meaning. The “advantage of being Jewish” is parallel to, and means the same as, “the benefit of those who are called 'the circumcision,' the Jews. What is the advantage or benefit of being Jewish? *Sha'ul* answers: 2 *Much in every way. First of all, they were entrusted with the sayings of God.* (Romans 3:2 TLV). A Jewish author wrote every book of the Bible except the two written by Luke. Luke was a Gentile but most likely also a proselyte, and there is no question that he wrote with a Jewish understanding. *Sha'ul* continued regarding the advantage of being Jewish: 4 *... To them belong the adoption and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Torah and the Temple service and the promises. 5 To them belong the patriarchs—and from them, according to the flesh, the Messiah, who is over all, God, blessed forever. Amen.* (Romans 9:4b-5 TLV). The Jews are a special group in G-d's eyes, and because they are, they have suffered much persecution throughout the centuries. We feel Tevye of *Fiddler On The Roof's* pain when he said, "G-d, sometimes, why don't you choose someone else?" But, even though ADONAI chose none of the other people groups of the earth, He loves every person He created equally and has provided a way for everyone to become covenant members of the same covenant that He made with Israel in the flesh, the Jews. He chose Israel to be "priests to the nations" (Exodus 19:5), and through that group, His eternal plan was revealed. It is that Yeshua, “the seed of Abraham” first disclosed in Genesis 22:18, would bless the nations.

At Mount Sinai, ADONAI spoke to Israel, which had just come out of Egypt: 5 *“Now then, if you listen closely to My voice, and keep My covenant, then you will be My own treasure from among all people, for all the earth is Mine.”* (Exodus 19:5 TLV). Some might say that

Exodus 19:5 was not fulfilled because Israel was not faithful and broke His covenant. But I believe that they were faithful, and it has been fulfilled through the centuries. That is because there has always been a faithful remnant, even during the time that Israel was being punished for idolatry and deported to Babylon. ADONAI said: 2 ... "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love. Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness. 3 Again I will build you, so you will be rebuilt, virgin Israel!" (Jeremiah 31:2b-3a TLV). Even though Israel had just whored with false gods, ADONAI called them "virgin," an expression of His love for them. Later in the same chapter, ADONAI revealed through Jeremiah that He would make a new covenant with Israel (31:30) because they had broken the one He had made with them at Sinai. (31:31). The New Covenant Jeremiah spoke of, cut with Yeshua's blood, is today's active redemptive covenant. This means that it's the only covenant available today under which sins can be forgiven. It is the Messianic Jews of today who fulfill the *Torah's* commandments and uphold the truth of Exodus 19:5. They are the "firstfruits" Priests to the Nations, the fulfillment of ADONAI's calling, and Messianic Gentiles are joined in this calling. There remains a righteous remnant of *Torah*-faithful Jews today: Messianic Jews who worship ADONAI under the New Covenant.

What is it that *Torah*-faithful Jewish followers of Yeshua do that identifies them as upholding the covenant? The *Torah* is about obeying ADONAI's commands, which He said through Jeremiah (31:32) He would write on the hearts of those in covenant with Him. Yeshua's Messianic Jewish followers obey His lawful commands to the best of their ability and repent, asking for forgiveness when they fail. And that same *Torah* requirement includes the Gentile members of the New Covenant, like me and many of you, the thousands who have been called to stand alongside Yeshua's Jewish covenant members as a part of Messianic Judaism. Together, we are the "One New Humanity" that *Sha'ul* spoke of to the Ephesian congregation (Ephesians 2:15-16; 4:24), Jew and Gentile, serving ADONAI.

How do we know when we fail to keep ADONAI's covenant? Yeshua's disciple John tells us: 4 *Everyone practicing sin also practices lawlessness—indeed, sin is lawlessness.* (1 John 3:4 TLV). Interestingly, the Hebrew equivalent of *anomia* (an-o-mee-ah), the Greek word for lawlessness, is *chamas*, a word similar to the Arabic word used by Israel's modern enemies, *Hamas*, meaning "zeal." Used frequently to mean "violence," the Hebrew *chamas* also means "lawlessness." *Strong's Online Concordance* states that *chamas* means "to treat violently or (to) wrong." I believe that John meant that sin involves violating ADONAI's laws, meaning disobeying them, which the Complete Jewish Bible clearly states. 4 *Everyone who keeps sinning is violating Torah — indeed, sin is violation of Torah.* (1 John 3:4 CJB). By understanding that the Hebrew word *Torah* means "teaching and instruction" on how to live according to ADONAI's laws, it logically follows that violating them would be a sin and require repentance. What about people who claim to know Yeshua but continue to sin without repentance? Again, John has the answer: 9 *No one born of God practices sin, because God's seed remains in him. He cannot sin, because he is born of God.* (1 John 3:9 TLV). "Practices" is the keyword, the unrepentant continuation of sin. Many people say that they have trusted in Yeshua, but the reality is that they are not in covenant with Him, as evidenced by their continued sinning and lack of repentance or remorse for their deeds.

How do we know what ADONAI's laws are? We must first know where to find them to understand what they are. We know that the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses, are the primary law-giving parts of the *Tanakh*, the Hebrew Bible, and while not primarily law-giving, the *Nevi'im* and *Ketuvim*, the Prophets and Writings, do contain some laws. Jewish and Christian authorities have canonized the *Tanakh*, and we begin with it as the initial source

of ADONAI's laws. For followers of Yeshua, the *Ketuvim Shlichim*, the writings of His disciples, the Books of Matthew through Revelation, have been canonized and also contain laws. We also consider these authoritative for us.

How many laws are there? In the 3rd century, *Rabbi Simlai* said there were 613 commands in the *Torah*, and this idea was developed further in the 12th century by *Rabbi Maimonides*. This remains the belief within Rabbinic Judaism today. While that seems like many laws to keep up with, the number of laws in the writings of Yeshua's followers is even greater. Someone has counted, and there are 1,050 within Matthew through Revelation. Are we accountable for them? Concerning the laws in the five books of Moses, there are not 613 laws that can be kept today, and ADONAI does not hold us responsible for laws we cannot keep. We cannot keep all 613 because many require the Temple and the Levitical Priesthood to be carried out. Since we have neither, approximately two-thirds of the 613 laws are still on the books, so to speak, but are inactive. Why are they inactive today? We know that ADONAI caused the First Temple to be destroyed, but what about the Second Temple? ADONAI used the Babylonians to punish Israel the first time, which we can verify in Scripture. But did He use the Romans to punish Israel a second time? We can only speculate that it was His will, since there is no Scripture to verify it, but the reality is that there is no Temple and Levitical Priesthood today. If those elements were necessary for worship today under the New Covenant, would not ADONAI have restored them? The truth is that ADONAI has made a New Covenant with Israel, a covenant with a new High Priest, Yeshua, and under this covenant, He does not require us to consider those laws which formerly operated under a different priesthood. What about the 1,050 laws of the *Ketuvim Shlichim*? Yes, we are responsible for them, but that does not mean we must search out each one and meticulously track them. It has to do with our circumcised hearts and how we desire to follow Yeshua. If we desire to follow Yeshua and the *mitzvot*, the laws of the *Torah* that we can obey, we will also wish to obey everything that Yeshua and His disciples commanded in the *Ketuvim Shlichim*. It's a general heart attitude. If our hearts are turned toward obedience, we will have repentant hearts and daily seek forgiveness for our shortcomings. We also have the Holy Spirit living within us, and ADONAI will impress upon our open hearts the areas in which we fail. We know that eventually we will have to stand before Yeshua and be judged for everything we've done in our lives, whether good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:10). If we understand that we are responsible for obedience and that disobedience is sin, we will strive to live holy lives, set apart to serve ADONAI and His Son Yeshua faithfully. Even after trusting in Yeshua, we are sinners, and as humans, we often sin. But we remain righteous through *teshuvah*, repentance, and asking for and receiving *selichah*, forgiveness. It's not about legalism but about obedience to the Holy Spirit. *Sha'ul* wrote: *6 He also made us competent as servants of a new covenant—not of the letter, but of the Ruach. For the letter kills, but the Ruach gives life.* (2 Corinthians 3:6 TLV). Keeping laws never saved anyone, and *Sha'ul* did not believe his salvation depended on law-keeping before he met Yeshua on the road to Damascus. In Judaism before Yeshua's sacrifice, law-keeping was a matter of covenant responsibility, but forgiveness and atonement came through repentance and the Temple sacrificial system. It's much different now. Those of us in covenant with Yeshua were justified and received our initial righteousness by trusting in His sacrifice. However, law-keeping remains our covenant responsibility and is the way to maintain the relationship we established with Yeshua. This is a very important point, and many people tend to misunderstand it. G-d loves us and wants us to trust in His Son Yeshua, but we must realize that we have continuing responsibility, and that responsibility is our obedience to His commands.

We continue next *Shabbat*. *Shabbat shalom!*