



Parshiyot Chukat – Balak

June 27, 2026

Torah: Numbers 19:1-25:9

Haftarah: Micah 5:6-6:8

Ketuwim Sh'lichim: Romans 8:18-39

Messianic Judaism 1

Shabbat shalom, Mishpacha! We all periodically need to refresh our basic understanding of the Scriptures, particularly how they fit into Messianic Judaism. Our memories are short, and we forget what we have heard or read; as disciples of Yeshua (*talmidim*), it is our obligation and our wish to learn from Him. As His disciples, we in *Beit Shalom* are part of modern Messianic Judaism through our connection with the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America's (MJAA) congregational arm, the International Alliance of Messianic Congregations and Synagogues (IAMCS). My ordination as a Congregational Leader is also through the IAMCS. The organization we are part of is not a denomination in the usual sense, but almost is. We all agree on the same statement of faith. As individual members, it is important that each of us knows what our organization believes. While our *Beit Shalom* Statement of Faith is not an exact copy of the IAMCS statement, the two are in agreement. Here is their statement.

Statement of Faith of the IAMCS

The Bible

That the BIBLE, consisting of the *Tanach* (Holy Scriptures) and the later writings commonly known as the *B'rit Hadasha* (New Covenant), is the only infallible and authoritative word of God. We recognize its divine inspiration, and accept its teachings as our final authority in all matters of faith and practice (Deut. 6:4-9; Prov. 3:1-6; Ps. 119:89, 105; Isa. 48:12-16; Rom. 8:14-17; II Tim. 2:15, 3:16-17).

Our congregation, *Beit Shalom*, has chosen to use the term *Ketuwim Shlichim*, meaning "writings of the emissaries or the apostles, to refer to the *B'rit Chadasha*, the writings called the New Testament by the Church.

Man

Created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), but through disobedience, man fell from his first state and became separated from God (Gen. 2:17; 3:22-24). Therefore, according to the Scriptures, all men are born with a sinful nature (Ps. 14:1-3; 49:7; 53:3; Isa. 64:6; Rom. 3:9-12, 23; 5:12). Man's only hope for redemption (salvation) is through the atonement made by the Messiah (Lev. 17:11; Isa. 53; Dan. 9:24-26; I Cor. 15:22; Heb. 9:11-14, 28; John 1:12, 3:36), resulting in regeneration by the Holy Spirit (Tit. 3:5), which is the new birth (John 3:3-8). For by grace we are saved through faith, it is a gift of God (Eph. 2:8-9).

God

We believe that the *Shema*, “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one” (Deut. 6:4), teaches that God is *Echad*, as so declared: a united one, a composite unity, eternally existent in plural oneness [Gen. 1:1 (*Elohim*: God); Gen. 1:26 “Let us make man in our image”; Gen. 2:24 Adam & Eve were created to be as one flesh (*basar echad*)], that He is a personal God who created us (Gen. 1 & 2), and that He exists forever in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as mentioned in Romans 8:14-17 (Father, Spirit, and Messiah – Son) and Matt. 28:18-20 (immersing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).

The important thing for us to understand about the nature of ADONAI is that the word *echad*, meaning “one,” is a compound “one” and can refer to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In the same way, Adam and Eve were *echad*, a compound one, or unity, put together by our Creator, and they became one flesh, *basar echad*, when they consummated their marriage by ADONAI. When we declare that ADONAI is One, we declare He is *echad*, a compound oneness, and not *yachid*, a word meaning “only.”

GOD THE FATHER (*Abba*)

John 6:27b; I Cor 1:3; Gal. 1:1; Rev. 3:5, 21; Jer. 3:4, 19; 31:9; Mal. 1:6; Matt. 6:9, 32; Luke 10:21-22; John 1:14; 4:23; 5:17-26; 6:28-46; Rom. 8:14-15. The IAMCS chose not to describe the Father, but to give references that speak of Him.

GOD THE SON (*HaBen*)

God does have a Son [Ps. 2; Prov. 30:4-6 (cf. Heb. 1); Luke 12:35-37; John 1:29-34, 49; 3:14-18]. The Son, called Yeshua (Jesus), meaning salvation, came into this world born of a virgin [Isa. 7:14 (cf. Luke 1:30-35)]. The Son is God (Deity), and is worshipped as God, having existed eternally [Ps. 110:1 (cf. Heb. 1:13); Isa. 9:6-7; Matt. 28:18-20; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:15-19; Rev. 3:21 (Heb. 1 – worshipped by angels); Rev. 4:8, 5:5-14]. This One is the promised *Mashiach* (Messiah) of Israel [Is. 9:6-7; 11:1; Dan. 9 (esp. verses 20-26); Isa. 53; John 1:17, 40-41, 45, 49; Mark 8:29]. He is the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star (Num. 24:17; Rev. 22:16). He is our Passover, the Lamb of God (I Cor. 5:7; Rev. 5; John 1:29).

Where the IAMCS states that Yeshua is God (Deity), they mean that He is divine, and not that He is the Father. Each member of the Godhead is divine.

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT (*Ruach HaKodesh*)

Introduced in Gen. 1:2b. In the *Tanakh*, the Spirit of God came upon individuals during the times of our forefathers, like Moses, David (see II Sam. 23:1-3), and the Prophets, for specific purposes. In the New Covenant, the Messiah, Yeshua, promised His disciples that “the Comforter” would come to them after He was gone, described as the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17, 26), who was with them and would be in them. Yeshua further declared that the Spirit of Truth would guide us into all truth and would glorify Him – the Messiah – not Himself (John 16:13-15). He empowers us (Acts 1:8). He seals us [Eph. 1:13; 4:30 (see NIV and Jewish New Testament versions)]. If we have not the Spirit, we are not His (Rom. 8:9). He leads us and teaches us (Rom. 8:14-17). His indwelling enables us to live a godly life. Acts 2:38 says, “Repent, be immersed, and receive the Holy Spirit.”

Messiah

RESURRECTION & JUDGEMENT

We believe in the resurrection of both the redeemed and the lost: the former to everlasting life and the latter to eternal separation from God, a state of everlasting punishment (Job 14:14; 19:25-27; Dan. 12:2-3; John 3:36; 11:25-26; Rev. 20:5-6, 10-15; 21:7-8).

THE MESSIAH

The Redeemer. The Scriptures promised two “comings” of the Messiah: First coming, promised in Dan. 9:24-26. Its purpose was to make an atonement for sin (Dan. 9:24-26; Isa. 53; Rom. 3:21-31; Heb. 9-10; John 3:16-17). Second coming Promised coming in the air to receive the believers to Himself (I Thess. 4:13-18; John 14:1-6; I Cor. 15:51-57). Messiah’s return to the earth. The Redeemer shall come to Zion (Isa. 59:20-21; Zech. 14:4). Israel’s spiritual redemption (Zech. 12:8-13:1; Rom. 11:25-27; Heb. 9:28; Jer. 31:31-40; the New Covenant). Israel’s national restoration is to recover the remnant of His people Israel from the four corners of the earth, and restore the Davidic Kingdom (Isa. 11 – to re-establish the throne and kingdom of David, which will last forever) [Isa. 9:6-7 (*cf. Luke 1:30-33*); Jer. 23:3-8].

Israel In Prophecy

We believe in God’s end-time plan for the nation of Israel and for the world. A central part of Messianic Judaism is the belief in the physical and spiritual restoration of Israel, as taught in the Scriptures. The greatest miracle of our day has been the re-establishment or rebirth of the State of Israel according to prophecy (Ezek. 34:11-31; 36-39; Hos. 3; Amos 9:11-15; Zech. 12-14; Isa. 11; 43; 54; 60-62; 66; Rom. 11:1-34) (see also Scriptures under V. THE MESSIAH).

Messianic Judaism

We recognize that Jewish people (physical descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob, whether through the mother’s or the father’s bloodline who place their faith in Israel’s Messiah, Yeshua, continue to be Jewish according to the Scriptures (Rom. 2:28-29). Gentiles who place their faith in Yeshua, are “grafted into” the Jewish olive tree of faith (Rom. 11:17-25), becoming spiritual sons and daughters of Abraham (Gal. 3:28-29). We observe and celebrate the Jewish Holy Days given by God to Israel, with their fulfillment in and through the Messiah Yeshua. We believe that true “Biblical Judaism,” the faith of first-century believers, which we seek to practice, acknowledges the continuity of faith in the one true God, revealed throughout the Scriptures, and ultimately manifested in God’s Son, Yeshua the Messiah. We believe that salvation has always been “by faith,” and that works of law, or righteous acts, have never saved anyone (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 2-6; Eph. 2:8-9; Heb. 11:6, 39). We acknowledge that the New Covenant body of believers is composed of both Jews and Gentiles who have received Yeshua the Messiah as the Promised Redeemer. The “middle wall of partition” has been broken down, and now we worship the God of Israel together (I Cor. 12:13; Eph. 2:13-14).

In addition to our IAMCS, there are other Messianic Jewish congregational organizations, including the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (UMJC), the Association of Messianic Congregations (AMC), and several others. Our congregation is a part of the MJAA and the IAMCS because ADONAI showed me that that was where He wanted me to join. In my early years in Messianic Judaism, I attended the UMJC’s meetings and even took some of my Yeshiva courses through them. We have close friends there, but we were not led to join that branch of Messianic Judaism. Among the groups, our statements of faith are very similar, and both groups believe in following the *Torah*.

We distinguish between 1st-century Messianic Judaism and modern Messianic Judaism. 1st-century Messianic Judaism was the faith of Yeshua's Jewish followers, including some Gentiles in the early years, during the years that Messianic Jews held leadership. But after the Second Jewish Revolt (133-136 CE), the Messianic Jewish leadership of Jerusalem was replaced by Gentiles, and the statement of faith was drastically changed. For more information about this period, see the messages of May 9, 2026, "Yeshua's Early Disciples Obeyed the *Torah* I," and June 6, 2026, "Yeshua's Early Disciples Obeyed the *Torah* II." Modern Messianic Judaism is a modern phenomenon, a G-d-led movement that grew into fullness in the 20th century.

What does the word "Messiah" mean? Is it something only associated with Yeshua, or does it have other applications? You might be surprised to learn that this word first appears in Leviticus chapter 4: *1 Adonai spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "Speak to Bnei-Yisrael, saying: If anyone sins unintentionally in any of Adonai's mitzvot that are not to be done, and commits any one of them 3 —or if the anointed kohen sins so as to bring guilt on the people—then let him offer for his sin which he has committed, a young bull without blemish to Adonai for a sin offering.* (Leviticus 4:1-3 TLV). The translation says: "If the anointed priest sins..." The words "the anointed" are translated from the Hebrew *HaMashiach* מָשִׁיחַ. The word *Mashaiach* appears 39 times in the Hebrew Bible (*Tanakh*) and is a descriptive noun denoting various people or objects set apart by G-d. Its English translation is Messiah. With regard to kings, it refers to Saul, David, and even Cyrus, the non-Israelite King of Persia. They were all Messiahs. It can refer to the High Priest as well as to certain objects, such as the altar. While these usages refer to people and things anointed by ADONAI, *mashiachs*, anointed ones, or anointed things, His Son, Yeshua, is "The *Mashiach*," the anointed Son of David who was prophesied to come.

It was the *Mashiach* who ordained that we should have Messianic Judaism. Yeshua gave parting instructions to His disciples, saying: *18, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, immersing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Ruach ha-Kodesh, 20 teaching them to observe all I have commanded you. And remember! I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* (Matthew 28:18b-20 TLV). Yeshua's disciples made disciples according to the way that He taught them. While that connection was lost after 136 CE when the Jewish leadership ended, it has been re-established in modern times. Why are you here? Each of us should know why we are a part of Messianic Judaism. If you have never thought about why you are here, may I suggest that you consider it. For many of us, it is because we were called here by the still, small voice of the *Ruach HaKodesh*. But the overriding reason is that we recognize that it is the truth.

Standing by the Sea of Galilee, Yeshua told His disciples to "make disciples, *talmidim* in Hebrew. But the English word "disciple" has lost the meaning of "*talmid*" in Yeshua's day. In first-century Israel, the master-disciple relationship was not just an academic pursuit but a total life commitment. A *talmid* sought absolute submission to their rabbi. The goal was to fully absorb the master's interpretation of the *Torah* and entirely imitate their way of living, speaking, and praying. That should be our level of submission to Yeshua today, our own personal, spiritual relationship with Him. Yes, we have a relationship with Him as Messiah and Redeemer, but we must also have one with Him as Teacher. But the closest understanding we can have today of how to do it is to examine how Yeshua's disciples followed Him, as the Scriptures show. As members of Messianic Judaism, each of us is a *talmid* (female: *talmidah*), a disciple of Yeshua. The modern Messianic rabbis in the

20th- and 21st-century Messianic organizations have heeded Yeshua's words in Matthew 28 and have taught us, and are continuing to teach us to follow the *Torah*. Quoting from the final category in the IAMCS Statement of Faith, Messianic Judaism, "We believe that true 'Biblical Judaism,' the faith of first-century believers, which we seek to practice, acknowledges the continuity of faith in the one true God, revealed throughout the Scriptures, and ultimately manifested in God's Son, Yeshua the Messiah." In that regard, we are doing our best to practice "true Biblical Judaism," as we understand it from studying the writings of Yeshua's *talmidim*. There's obviously a lot to learn. The Statement of Faith addresses only a few points, and there are thousands of others we must seek to understand.

We should also have more than a passing knowledge of how Messianic Judaism, a modern phenomenon that reemerged after 2000 years of dormancy, came to be. I believe our Messianic Judaism at *Beit Shalom* Messianic Synagogue is the Judaism of Yeshua and His 1st-century Jewish and Gentile disciples, and that their worship and observance of Scripture sets a pattern for us. ADONAI's precise timing for the re-emergence of Messianic Judaism was essential. Yeshua prophesied about the time, and it could not have come at any other time. Speaking first about what would happen to the Jews of Jerusalem some 40 years later, when the Romans would attack the city in 70 CE, and then about a future time, 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). He knew when that future time would come, when the times of the Gentiles' rule over Jerusalem would end. And that precise time was the only time it could happen. There were Jewish rabbis who trusted in Yeshua in the 19th century, recognizing Him as the *Mashiach*, but their movements did not endure because the timing was not right, especially because the Jews were still scattered around the world, and Israel as a nation was just a gleam in the eyes of some of them.

Two who trusted in Yeshua, hoping to inspire their fellow Jews of the 19th century, were Rabbi Joseph Rabinowitz (1837–1899) and Rabbi Yechiel Lichtenstein (1831–1912). Rabbi Rabinowitz is historically recognized as the founding father of the modern Messianic Jewish movement. A former Hasidic Jew and lawyer, he founded the "Israelites of the New Covenant" congregation, *Bnei Yisrael shel HaBrit HaChadashah*, in Kishinev, Russia, in 1884. He maintained his Jewish cultural identity, observed the Sabbath, and promoted Jewish customs while simultaneously believing Yeshua was the Messiah. Rabbi Lichtenstein was a prominent Orthodox rabbi and scholar who also embraced Yeshua. He was an associate of Rabbi Rabinowitz and wrote extensively to reconcile the New Testament with traditional Jewish thought.

Kishenev, where Rabbi Rabinowitz's congregation was located, was in what was called South Russia, now Ukraine. Some of you may remember the Sci-Fi movie, "Close Encounters of the Third Kind." My German family had a close encounter but never knew it, and I was amazed to learn of it years ago, but unfortunately, some years after my elders were dead and gone. My Ackermann ancestor emigrated to South Russia in 1809, one of many Germans offered the opportunity by Empress Catherine of Russia, "Catherine the Great," a German princess who married the Russian Czar. Although she died in 1796, she established a program that continued to lead thousands of her German countrymen to a new life in Russia. My Ackermann family settled in a small farming community called Rohrbach and lived there for some 77 years. Because Rabbi Rabinowitz faced resistance to converting Jews in his hometown of Kishinev, he would develop direct ties to Rohrbach, about 150 miles away. Because of Jewish resistance and because he had not yet obtained government approval to

minister, he took his three daughters to be immersed in the German settlement of Rohrbach. In October 1887, his three daughters were baptized there by an ethnically Jewish pastor of the German Reformed Church, Alexander Venetianer (ve-NEE-sha-ner). My Ackermann family's "almost connection" was that they left in 1886, missing Rabbi Rabinowitz by a little over a year. Our family story is that the Russian government was about to conscript 12-year-old boys into the army. My grandfather, Heinrich Ackermann, was born in 1875 and would have been 12 in September 1886, about one year before the immersion party came. My family left for the United States in 1886 when my grandfather was 11, and the rest is history. While my family's close encounter had nothing to do with UFOs, it is a unique and treasured event for me. Rabbi Rabinowitz's story also ended with his death in 1899. He had no successor to carry on the movement, and it did not endure, primarily because its time had not yet come. But the time did come after the terrible Holocaust of the 1930s and 40s and after Israel became a nation in 1948. ADONAI's timing is perfect.

The ending of the "times of the Gentiles" in Jerusalem could have been at no other time than ADONAI had ordained. Interestingly, the end of the times of the Gentiles and the reformation of Messianic Judaism occurred simultaneously. A coincidence? Of course not. I believe ADONAI ordained these things to happen this way to show their linkage as spiritual fulfillments of His plans for the End Times. Messianic Judaism was being reformed as a movement even as Yeshua's prophecy about Jerusalem was fulfilled. On June 7, 1967, the IDF recaptured the City of Jerusalem, and after 2000 years, Jerusalem was no longer trampled underfoot by Gentiles. I agree with the IAMCS Statement of Faith that our Messianic Judaism is the Judaism of Yeshua and His early Jewish and Gentile disciples of the 1st century. It bears quoting again from the section entitled Messianic Judaism, which says: "We believe that true 'Biblical Judaism,' the faith of first-century believers, which we seek to practice, acknowledges the continuity of faith in the one true God, revealed throughout the Scriptures, and ultimately manifested in God's Son, Yeshua the Messiah." I also believe that true "Biblical Judaism," the faith of Yeshua's 1st-century followers, is one with our faith today. After the 1st century, some of Yeshua's Gentile followers began to change essential components of the faith, which, through the following centuries, became the faith of the Church. Our belief system is essentially the Judaism of Yeshua and His early disciples, but now without the Temple. This directly relates to our understanding that "the *Torah*," meaning "teaching and instruction, is our prime directive. 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 obeyed the *Torah* of Moses as it related to the Temple as long as it stood, but not the whole *Torah* after it was destroyed. That was for two reasons: there was no Temple or priesthood to enable certain commands, and they now had a new High Priest, Yeshua. Even though He became High Priest after His death on the cross, Yeshua's disciples continued to attend the Temple, demonstrating their obedience to the commands of the *Torah*, and in one case even paid for sacrifices to be offered (*Sha'ul*; Acts 21:24). 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 Scriptures, some can't be carried out today. Yet, we obey ADONAI's commands, which can

be obeyed without the requirement of the Temple or the Levitical priesthood. All things have not yet come to pass, so we must believe that the *Torah* still remains for us. Yeshua obeyed all commands, and He is our perfect example. He did not fulfill them to eliminate our need to obey them, 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 shrimp or about the Sabbath. A campaign slogan for us as His Messianic disciples would be WWYD: "What would Yeshua do?" We know the answer. He would eat kosher and keep the seventh-day Sabbath. ADONAI has never changed, and He said: *6 "For I am Adonai. I do not change, So you, children of Jacob, are not consumed."* (Malachi 3:6 TLV). Despite Israel's frequent unfaithfulness, ADONAI does not completely wipe us out as we justly deserve, and because His mercy and covenants are unchanging, we are preserved.

We continue next *Shabbat. Shabbat shalom!*