

*A Messianic Jewish Approach to Religious Revival, Renewal and Reality*

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She Bears Seed/Infected One Stronger Than the Stain

Torah:

**Leviticus 12:1-15:33**

Haftarah:

**2 Kings 7:3-20**

Brit Chadashah:

**Matt. 23:16-24:2, 30, And 31**

**L-rd's Table (18<sup>th</sup> Omer)**

(1-4) 14:4-7. Two living, pure birds, some cedar wood, crimson, and hyssop. One bird was killed over living water and the other dipped in the blood and in the water and released in the fields and the leprous one declared clean.

(5, 6) 7:6, 7. The L-rd scared the enemies away at dawn and they left everything the people needed.

(7) 23:28 Inside out spirituality, clean, not contained nor just disguised.

Now that spring is nearly almost here, I want to start another series, which I call **a Messianic Jewish approach to religious revival, renewal and reality.** We live in a world of spiritual confusion where many people are convinced that religious faith is primitive, unrealistic and irrelevant. Yet in the midst of all our technological splendour and in the midst of the exponential explosion of scientific knowledge, people are asking the same questions about the meaning of life and the ultimate purpose of living. It is the coming to terms with these questions of meaning and purpose that I want to talk to you about over the next few weeks.

Each of us needs to come to terms with our place in the scheme of things and as Messianic Jews and Gentiles we have a very definite sense of meaning and purpose, but it is a worldview, which our society is finding less and less meaningful in its search for **satisfaction** and **fulfilment**.

It's funny that most people have respect for those of us who are spiritual (religious), even if they do not have much respect for what we believe. At times they may pity us because we are missing out on the pleasures of this life (the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life). At other times they pity us because they are convinced that what we believe is nothing but a primitive set of myths and legends which modern man has supposedly grown out of and effectively disproved.

They feel that it is fine for us to believe, but they take our faith as seriously as they take **Santa Claus** and the **Easter Bunny**, which are nice stories which teach good values but also which a truly serious, scientific mind could not be expected to actually consider true or real. I know this because I was one of them and I encounter this kind of **patronizing suspicion** regularly.

Some people feel I am in it for the money, or because somehow I need a crutch and cannot face the possibility that religious belief is not real. Yet even though many people do not accept the answers to the meaning of life which the Bible provides, they are still asking the same questions. They usually come up with **pseudo-scientific** "working definitions" of reality and purpose which either claim that final answers are impossible to find, or that we are on the right track and once we learn enough about the universe, we'll eventually figure it out.

We are not yet sure how it all started, nor where it is going, nor even why we are here, but we know two things for sure – religious answers are not true, but the truth is out there somewhere and one day, like **good cosmic detectives**, we will eventually put all the clues together and figure it out. In this series I want to answer some of these objections and articulate what I feel is a **reasonable approach** to faith and reason in a **post-religious, spiritually hungry secular world**.

This morning, I want to make **three statements** as I establish the groundwork for my series and hopefully respond to some of the objections which are made concerning our faith in the supernatural G-d of the Bible.

First of all, as believers in the Bible, we **pre-believe** that there is an **objective reality** which does not depend on us to believe in order for it to be real, like Peter Pan trying to save Tinker Bell by getting people to believe in fairies. Our G-d and our faith do not suffer from a massive inferiority complex which needs our belief to give it life – like some kind of food or strength. A lack of faith in G-d and the Bible does not kill G-d nor does it turn the Bible into a bunch of make-believe stories we need to leave behind as we grow out of our spiritual immaturity.

Secondly we believe that the physical universe in all of its splendour is one of the **chief testimonies** to the reality of G-d (Ps. 19:1). Any scientific discoveries which have been made about the universe, about life or about history, archaeology **never** threaten nor undermine our faith in the G-d of the Bible. We require that we believe must be found to be true.

Thirdly we understand that believers are not always reasonable people who have thought through every aspect of their faith and that there are some elements of what Bible believing people believe which are just plain silly. It is frequently these **silly beliefs** which are more of a barrier to people coming to faith than what the Bible actually teaches.

Let me conclude with two verses from the book of Hebrews. Turn with me to Hebrews 11:1, 6.

I know that I will not be able to answer every ***objection*** to faith to ***everyone's satisfaction***, because **having faith is a commitment to that which will always be over and above our ability to fully understand**. However, what I choose to believe must be as real and as reasonable as the universe in which we live. It is not just a case of believing whatever we want, without being able to give a reasonable answer to those who want to know why I believe (I Peter 3:15).

Let me state clearly that I believe in the supernatural G-d of the Bible and in the reality of His Son and in the validity of what the Bible teaches. However, I am not afraid to examine some of the objections to faith which people may bring my way and I want to take you through a series based on what I call the five "Cs" or the five great witnesses to the reality of G-d: the cosmos, conscience, culture, circumstances and the canon of Scripture.

In this series we will examine what it means to have faith and what it means to grow in faith in a world which is both hostile and indifferent to the message we proclaim.