The term "Messianic" is one you may be familiar with. Perhaps you have heard someone talking about "Hebrew Roots" or "Judeo-Christianity." It's just as likely that these terms are mostly unfamiliar to you. What does this all mean? Is this about some type of dangerous fringe-group or subversive cult? Let's take a closer look at some of the basic information surrounding the movement.

In the Beginning

Although there are quite a few divergent groups under the umbrella of the Messianic movement, the fundamental motivation of the group as a whole is a return to the religious practice of the early followers of Jesus, whose name in Hebrew is Yeshua (meaning "Salvation"). Yeshua and His earliest followers were entirely Jewish and understood His words from a cultural perspective that is alien to our own. This position is affirmed by the Assemblies of God based Center For Holy Land Studies: "...the Center seeks to transform the way Christians study and understand the Bible, encouraging people 'to study the Law of the Lord and to do it' (Ezra 7:10)" (*http://holylandsstudies.org/Show/WHY-WE-EXIST*). By placing the words of Yeshua in their original cultural context, we are able to better understand Him and our relationship with Him as His disciples.

The Movement Today

In between the early first century and today, much has taken place in the church to cause a separation between the Jewish people and Yeshua. Persecution, forced conversion, and teachings such as that the Torah is no longer valid and that the church has replaced Israel as the true chosen people of God have driven the wedge further still. The present-day depiction of Jesus no longer looks like a Jew or acts like a Jew, so how can He be the Jewish Messiah? In recent years, however, an alternative to this theology has arisen. Fueled by attempts at reuniting Jewish people with Yeshua, various Messianic/Hebrew Christian organizations emerged throughout the 1900s. They asserted that just as the early disciples retained their Jewish identity while still following Yeshua, so can Jewish believers today. A perhaps unforeseen consequence arose from these attempts: Christians began to see the value and depth of Biblical truths which were previously misunderstood or relegated to the position of archaic and obsolete. The effect of this knowledge can be seen today in that the overwhelming majority (over ninety percent) of Messianic congregations are charismatic in nature, and about one-third have even been birthed from the Assemblies of God, revealing that a large percentage of those living Messianic lifestyles are not themselves ethnically Jewish.

While the manifestation of the Spirit is most often associated with Pentecostal/Evangelical Christianity, we can see the Spirit moving in the lives of the Israelites from the beginning. The Mt. Sinai account, in its original translation, says that the people "saw the voices and the torches" (**Exodus 20:18**) as God spoke to them. According to tradition, each word spoken by God went out in seventy languages. This day is also strongly associated with miraculous healing, since the verse above says that "ALL the people" saw the voices, meaning any who were blind must have been healed. The strong parallels between this and the day of Pentecost are evident, and rightfully so: Pentecost occurred on Shavuot, which is the day the Torah was given on Mt. Sinai. The Spirit dwelt in Moses, and in turn was placed on the seventy elders who assisted in judging the people (**Numbers 11:17**). Joshua is chosen to succeed Moses, and in him the Spirit dwelt also (**Numbers 27:18**). The Spirit rested on each of the judges, giving them wisdom in leadership and judgement. The outpouring of the Spirit is symbolized when oil is used to anoint kings and priests. Prophecies, healings, wisdom, miracles, tongues, and all of the other gifts of the Spirit are recorded in the Scriptures in the lives of God's chosen people, our spiritual foundation.

This long heritage of spirituality extends even to today. While traditional Judaism is often viewed from the outside as sterile and rigid, within it is found a world full of life known as Hasidism. The main aims of Hasidic Judaism are revival from spiritual poverty, increase in piety, spiritual and emotional growth and maturity, and increased understanding and application of mystical beliefs to the established rabbinic practices. These beliefs are outwardly expressed in worship, which shows itself in emotional dancing and fervent prayer. One belief of theirs that is particularly interesting is that people can cleave to a righteous man in order to have that man's righteousness counted in their own favor and to draw closer to God. For us, this man is Yeshua. To take an in-depth look at the parallels between Hasidism and Christianity would be beyond the scope of this brochure.

We have looked briefly at the Messianic/ Hebrew roots movement. While the beliefs within the movement varies, we have looked at its foundations in regard to charismatic Christianity. We also briefly touched on the spiritual movement within Biblical times as well as modern-day Jewish practice, showing that we all have much more in common than is generally recognized.

Quick Facts

- "Over **ninety percent** of the Messianic congregations in the United States are "**charismatic**" in their theological orientation (believing in the gifts [charisms] of the Holy Spirit: tongues, healing, etc.), with **one-third** having been created by the charismatic **Assemblies of God** denomination." (*https://witnessed.wordpress.com/2008/07/14/messianic-judaism-today/*)

- "The vast majority of Messianic Jews are in the 'evangelic' wing of Messianic Judaism [and] hold theological beliefs which are essentially identical to those of evangelical Christianity." (*http://www.religioustolerance.org/mess_jud2.htm*)

- "Congregations sprang up throughout the United States with a distinctively Jewish twist on Evangelical Christianity, catering to Jews and non-Jews alike." (*https://www.academia.edu/22017462/Between_Pentecostalism_and_Hasidism_A_Social_History_of_the_Messianic_Jewish_Movement_in_Ukraine*)

- Many congregations have a membership of at least 40-60% Gentiles. (*http://www.kesherjournal.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=51&Itemid=422&fontstyle=f-default*)

Questions/Comments?

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The Messianic Movement and Charismatic Christianity

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