Oasis

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YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW!

Ancient Idolatry and its Modern Counterpart in Northern Israel

By Guy Cohen

Canaanite Religion and the Hebrews

Historically, the name of the land of Israel was Canaan and it spanned the territory between Gaza and northern Syria. The Canaanite religions believed in El (the god of Heaven) who married Asherah (the god of the earth) and gave birth to Ba'al. These three primary deities were complemented by a host of lesser gods - several of which became quite prominent in Canaanite worship. Among these "lesser" deities was the worship of the fearsome Molech and his fertility goddess consort, Ashtoreth. The worship of Ashtoreth was a cycle of lust and sexual debauchery. Temple prostitution fueled the lust of the worshippers, and the babies conceived were sacrificed through fire (burned to death) to appease the terrible Molech.

When the Hebrews came into the land they were commanded by God to capture and destroy all the cities of idol worship. Unfortunately, they did not finish the job. During different periods in the following centuries, Israel even joined in the idolatry! We are told in Scripture that Israelites engaged in the worship of Molech in the Hinnom Valley. The cities listed in Judges 1:27-36 were not captured by the Israelites even though God commanded them to do so. Among these cities were **Acco,** Sidon, Ahlab and Akzib (which the tribe of **Asher** did not conquer). As a result, Hebrews lived in cooperation with idol worshippers, and eventually began to worship Ashtoreth.

Spiritual Strongholds that Remain

The question is: "How does this apply to us today in Acco?" We don't have Ashtoreth worship today, and we don't have altars to sacrifice babies to Molech. REALLY? I believe the Scriptures are the same yesterday, today and tomorrow! These spiritual strongholds of lust and human sacrifice are still present in Northern Israel today!

The modern cycle is: 1) unbridled idolization of sex leading to 2) a large number of unwanted babies being conceived; and 3) the sacrifice of babies through abortions. Israeli public schools teach about sex, but they don't teach the spiritual realities about sex that are in the Word of God. There is free access to pornography through the internet and advertising. Even sex parties, prostitution, and human-trafficking are present in modern Israel. So many babies are conceived during the mandatory military service that each female soldier is allowed up to three free abortions during her military service of two years! The official figure of legal abortions to date in Israel is 20,000 a year! There are two hospitals in our area admin-

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istering abortions, one in Haifa and one in Nahariya. Abortions are performed in different ways. One way is surgical and another chemical. In the chemical procedure the baby is literally burned, in parallel to the ancient child sacrifice ritual of causing a baby to pass through fire.

Where does this place us as believers? The answer is that we have a personal and corporate responsibility to fight this cycle. Individually, each of us must ask: "Are we keeping our walk with God intimate and pure?" Corporately, we must come together in prayer and intercession for our land! The blood that was spilled on the ground of Acco in the past - and that continues to be spilled today - is crying out for justice.

On October 18, 2013, there will be a gathering on the walls of the old city of Acco to repent for the child sacrifices that took place there. We will proclaim the atoning blood of Yeshua over the area and pray and intercede that no more innocent blood be shed. Participating in this time of intercession will be congregations from throughout Israel. In addition, those attending both the Baruch HaBa Conference and the Pro-Life Conference will also join us. ***Please mark your calendars and intercede together with us on that day.*** Pray that the cycle of lust and death would be broken!

The Work of Pro-Life in Acco

In December 2008 we opened a Pro-Life office in the Harvest of Asher congregational building to serve Acco and the surrounding area. To date over 70 lives have been saved. Below are the names of some of the babies who were allowed to be born. The list includes both Jewish and Arab babies: *Mirav, Ravit, Linoy, Topaz, Eden, Topaz, Noi, Naomi, Shir, Meital, Tamara, Shiran, Cherot, Doreen, Lilit, Lital, Shanee, Yael, Tamar, Mirav, Aaron, Yair, Catherine, Shira, Abraham, Oren, Ahmed, Samir, Abu, Eli, Rami, Tomer, David, Shimon, Ben, Matar, Tamir, Daniel, Yuval, Barak, Eliran, Sharon, Eli, Ali, Jacob, Ofek, Gal and others.*

Our Pro-Life counselor added her perspective on this area of ministry.

Q: How do you see your job as connected to the roots of abortion and child sacrifice to Molech?

A: Until this very day the sins of our ancestors have had a great influence on the city of Acco. Bringing sacrifices to idols allowed these territorial spirits to rule over people's lives and draw them to sin. Families today are still being affected by generational curses.

Q: What has God done until now through the Pro-Life Ministry in Acco?

A: Many women have seen light in an otherwise dark and grim reality and found awakened hope and serenity for their souls. They have received love and someone to share their burdens with, something that many of them for different reasons could not do all their lives. Some women stay in touch even after they finish receiving aid from the ministry - seeking advice and a compassionate listener. I hope over time to be more of an influence and cooperate more effectively in the lives of these women! ✡

Harvest of Asher Messianic Congregation (Acco)
Part of the Tents of Mercy Network

An evening of thoughtful fun and creative fellowship For the ladies at Tents of Mercy

By Hannah T.

Food, Fun & Fellowship…and some jewelry too!

The women in our community work very hard, most with physically demanding jobs of many hours, in addition to the regular demands of home making and parenting. For the most part, they neither have the opportunity nor make the time to focus on something fun and inspiring for themselves. In light of this, we have been contouring our women's meetings to attempt to meet this essential need by including something for body soul and spirit ~ yummy food, a craft to stimulate our creative juices, and an inspiring thought nugget from the Bible.

In our recent women's evening, the theme was from Proverbs 31:10 where King Solomon writes **"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her *price* is far above rubies."** (The word actually means 'pearls' in modern Hebrew - anyway, some kind of lovely stone… ☺) After eating dinner together, we played a "getting to know you" game, talking a little bit about what makes us feel beautiful and valuable. Then we were encouraged to meditate on Proverbs 31 in its entirety over the summer and to consider that God calls all of us to be virtuous women. He has declared all of us valuable by paying the ultimate **price** for us – His life. Amen!

Our precious and virtuous women

To cap off our evening we brought out beads and supplies for each woman to make her own piece of jewelry. The room buzzed with friendly, if somewhat chaotic creativity and every woman got to take home a reminder that her worth is "more than rubies." ✡

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Tents of Mercy אוהלי רחמים

Our Vision:

Tents of Mercy - to participate in today's historic exodus by assisting Israel's returning exiles.

No spectators in the Kingdom - to be a worshiping, sharing community based in homes, equipping each one for service.

Come back Yeshua - to welcome Yeshua home to Israel, by restoring the Jewish roots of New Covenant faith.

Editor's note: Recently a local Hebrew newspaper in the Jordan Valley region published a feature article about Messianic Jews in the area. This very favorable (!) article was largely an interview with Eric and Terri who lead the Poriya congregation as part of the Tents of Mercy Network. **This article is made up of translated excerpts from the original.**

The Ark in the congregational meeting room in Eric and Terri's home. Photo: Mira Neubach

"TIMES OF MESSIAH"

By Osnat Lev-Ari

The Jordan Valley is a small valley, but it has a great variety of natural and human treasures. There is something very communal about this valley, which was founded by idealistic and cooperative groups of people. Even today kibbutzim, moshavim and those who differ in their faith and in their way of life, live together in an interwoven network of relationships. Among these communities, is also a Messianic community. ***As we approached the Feast of Weeks [Pentecost], we went out to meet representatives of the Messianic community in the area,*** **Eric and Terri Morey, leaders of a home congregation in Poriya Illit…**

The reading of the book of Ruth during [Pentecost] emphasizes the universal aspects of the Torah. Anyone who wants to read and believe the Torah may do so, even if he is from Moab – a people who were a bitter enemy to the Nation of Israel at that time.

Therefore we went…to meet representatives of two Messianic fellowships who live among us and feel a strong connection to the Jewish people and the nation of Israel. As we gathered the information for this article, we discovered they really are an inseparable part of Israel. The Messianic Jews believe that their faith has ancient roots. They see themselves as a continuation of the first disciples who followed in the way of Yeshu[a].

Members of the independent fellowships who belong to this faith define themselves as Jews, though the movement is not recognized as a branch of Judaism by almost any of the other branches [within Judaism].

A Revelation and a Love Story

The position of the Messianic fellowship in Israel causes a conflict. The government is not happy to give Messianics citizenship, and therefore those being interviewed wanted to know the purpose of the interview. My answer: "Because we want to broaden the picture, especially due to a lack of awareness, and suspicion toward the Messianic community. We want to show the human variety in the Jordan Valley and the importance of community."

Q: (Interviewer) What does the word Messianic mean?

A: (Eric) Messianics see themselves as continuing the way of Yeshua. We have in our fellowship both Messianic Jews and Messianic Christians. All of Yeshua's first disciples were Messianic Jews, and this faith drew multitudes…

Q: (Interviewer) Terri, you come from a Jewish home. How did you become Messianic?

A: I came from a secular Jewish home. In 1967 I lived in Philadelphia, and when the Six Day War broke out, I wanted to be here in Israel and help my people. I was 29 years old and no one understood why I wanted to go to a war zone. But I was sure that was what I was supposed to do. When I did get to come to Israel, the war was over. But as soon as my feet touched the land of Israel, I knew that it was to become my home. I wasn't religious, but when I came here I had a divine revelation. I returned to the USA and opened a job-personnel business. Only 18 years later did I at last fulfill my desire to move to Israel. All those years I wanted to make aliyah, but it didn't work out. I never found the right time to do it - I also was single. Finally I understood that if I didn't do it now it would never happen!

Terri and Eric Morey, pastors of the Messianic Congregation in Poriyah Illit
Photo: Mira Neubach

At that time Eric was a good friend of mine, but we were not involved romantically. The day I decided to close the business and to immigrate to Israel, Eric rang my office to ask about employment possibilities. When Eric arrived, I had just come back from a lawyer who thought it would not be advisable to sell such a successful business and immigrate to Israel. Eric knew from the expression on my face that something was not right. He asked me if he could pray for me and I was happy for his suggestion. While he prayed for me, I saw a vision of us being married and living in Israel. I didn't tell him that, but 13 months later we got married! After two years we immigrated to Israel, and we have lived here together for 30 years.

Interviewer: That's a good story!

Terri: It's an encouraging story to all women who are looking for the right husband, because God has a plan for everyone in His own time…

Q: (Interviewer) What festivals do you celebrate?

A: (Eric) We celebrate all the festivals in the Tenach [Old Testament]…We hold to everything written in the Bible. For instance, we don't work on Shabbat, but other things like driving on Shabbat or turning on the lights on Shabbat that are not written about in the Bible are not relevant for us…

Where is God?

According to Messianic Jews' faith, the prophecies in the Tenach [Old Testament] speak about the New Covenant and Yeshua the Messiah; and The New Testament does not contain new dogma, but is a continuation of the Tenach…

Q: (Interviewer) In Purim 2008 a religious Jew sent a bomb wrapped up like a holiday gift for Purim to a Messianic family in Ariel and their son was injured..

A: (Eric) Look, this man was doing the same thing to Arabs. He views people who are different as his enemies. Thank God it only happened one time. This kid went through many medical treatments, and now his condition is much better. The family even said that they forgave the criminal.

Prayer and worship at the Poriyah Congregation

Q: (Interviewer) How can you forgive?

A: (Eric) You have to see the enemy from a Godly perspective and see him first as a human being and forgive him…

Q: (Interviewer) How do you explain that Yeshua came to give us a better world in light of the Holocaust in which millions of innocent people, including children and babies, were murdered. Where were Yeshua and God?

A: (Eric) I think many bad things happen to Jews in the world, unfortunately even through the acts of [nominal] Christians, and the Holocaust was the worst of all. Therefore, many Jews in the country see in the believers of Yeshua a threatening danger. If we believed in Buddha, it would not have created a reaction. I personally understand the attitude of the Jewish people to the Messianics. On the other hand, here in Poriya we don't feel any hostilities from the locals. On the contrary, we are in great relationship with everybody. They trust us and our good intentions. ✡