

Stripling Discovery Brings New Relevance to Messianic Jews' Opposition to Contemporary Marcionism

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Discovery of the Joshua Tablet by an archaeological team under the direction of Dr. Scott Stripling on Mount Ebal in Israel lends more relevance to the Messianic Jewish movement. The discovery was announced at the end of March 2022.

Messianic Judaism is one of the fastest growing religious denominations in the United States. Since adherents believe and teach that Jesus of Nazareth is the Jewish Messiah, they place more significance on the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh) than do many other denominations. At the same time, American religious denominations are turning to a form of Marcionism, an Early Church heresy which denied the necessity of the Hebrew Bible.

This writer recently had the privilege of addressing members of three different Messianic Jewish congregations. The meeting was held in the fellowship hall of the WELS church in Sierra Vista, Arizona. Additional viewers watched the presentation as it was live-streamed over the internet; now posted at <https://tolcaz.com/special-presentation-recording>

Attendees viewed more than 125 PowerPoint slides, each of which compared the Torah and the Book of Revelation speaking about the same subject written with the same Hebraic Meter.

The authenticity of the Joshua Tablet is reinforced because it is the only ancient Hebraic Meter outside the Bible; the same Hebraic Meter found in the Torah and the Book of Revelation. Hebraic Meter is the arrangement of words and/or phrases repeated in multiples of 7s, 10s, or 12s. In the case of the Joshua Tablet, the word for *curse* is repeated ten times and *LORD* two times in chiasmic order reflecting the content of Deuteronomy Chapter 27.

Stripling's book is to be published in late summer of 2022, and will give a full account of the discovery, including photographic reproduction of the pre-archaic text, its historical significance, and a literary analysis.

The following two videos are excellent resources for learning about the Joshua Tablet.

Mt. Ebal "Curse Tablet" Full Press Conference

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VDD92qp_lfQ&t=13s held at the Lanier Theological Library in Houston Texas.

Archaeological find upends secular academia - Pod for Israel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWIKg9g1IXs&t=1908s>

Even before evidence of the discovery is published, university and seminary biblical scholars across the nation are skeptical of it. Doctor Robert Cargill charges that Stripling's bias discredits anything Stripling discovers.

“The ‘Mt. Ebal Lead Curse Inscription’ — Dr. Robert Cargill Explains Why Most Scholars are Skeptical” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pY3PsYlljs>

In anticipation of how determined critics are to prove the discovery is a hoax, Stripling is delaying the presentation of the Joshua Tablet until after his book is published. This way he controls the narrative; rebuts the critics in print and exposes their a priori bias.

For starters, here are a few facts: The Joshua Tablet is an original document written on lead; it is not a copy. The writer of the Joshua Tablet may have participated in the Exodus and been an eyewitness to the presence of God on Mount Sinai, which qualifies him as a prophet. The Dead Sea Scrolls validate the existence of the Hebrew Bible before the birth of Christ, and now the Joshua Tablet validates the existence of Israel in the Promised Land in the 15th century BC. This amounts to a total refutation of those who claim that the Exodus never took place because of their religion or politics.

It’s unknown what kind of security precautions Stripling might be taking, but we pray he is able to achieve his goals on schedule.

During the Sierra Vista presentation, these key points were directed to Messianic Jews.

First, there have been three major changes in the Bible since the time of the Apostles.

- a) The first came when Constantine ordered the publication of 50 complete Bibles to be placed around the Byzantine Empire.
- b) The second took place when the Bible was translated and printed on the Gutenberg Press.
- c) The third took place beginning in the 1990s when the entire Bible was available in Hebrew and Greek to the public in computer code with grammatical language tags.

Second, the assertion was made that God cannot be found outside the Bible. There is no access to the Holy Spirit without the text. Rather it is God who finds us with His words.

Third, the proving unity of the Hebrew Old Testament with the Greek New Testament based on Hebraic Meter establishes continuity of doctrine, narrative, interpretation, prophecy, and that both Testaments are speaking about the identical Messiah with the same mission.

In terms of prophecy and fulfillment, the Hebrew and Greek Testaments are mutually dependent as one over-arching Divine message. Contemporary Christian denominations misrepresent the Bible when they suggest Christianity was or is a New Testament religion, rather than the Jewish religion given to the world. In numerous references both *The Book of Hebrews* and *The Book of Revelation* define themselves as speaking for the Jewish religion.

Fourth, the mainline religious denominations are in a state of chaos and collapse. They are attempting to defend their religion without defending the authenticity of the Bible’s original text, particularly the canonical books written before the time of Christ’s incarnation.

Fifth, both the reestablishment of geographic Israel and the recognition of Jerusalem as its capital have made it fashionable for some to claim they are Messianic Jews simply by worshipping on Saturday and not eating pork.

The Stripling discovery refocuses the importance of Messianic Judaism because they are compelled to advocate for the messiahship of Jesus Christ based on the Hebrew Bible. Messianic Jews are continually challenged by Rabbinic Judaism to defend or explain why Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah and why it is not possible to be saved by the Law.

Messianic Jews do not minimize the importance of the Mosaic Law, which is now a popular trend in contemporary Christianity and ignores the context of Jesus's ministry. Five hundred years ago, Martin Luther, the preeminent Hebrew scholar of his day, placed the Ten Commandments first in his Catechism, because the Ten Commandments are the perfect exposition of the Revealed Law.

The following video presents a stimulating debate between a Messianic Jew and a Rabbi on Jesus's messiahship and the importance of the Law.

Is Jesus the Jewish Messiah? (Debate),
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_oCkfe4ivQ&t=6724s

With all this, Messianic Judaism will not achieve the stature of a respected denominational witness until it establishes the basis for Justification by Faith in the Hebrew Bible, particularly in the Torah. Further, the doctrine of Justification by Faith must be shown to be a Pauline exposition of the Torah, and not a Pauline-New-Testament innovation.

There is not one verse in the Septuagint that contains the words *faith/belief* and *works*, while there are more than 40 in the New Testament, which is 3.25 times shorter than the Hebrew Bible.

Without an exposition of the Doctrine of Justification based in the text of the Torah, there is no basis for the work the Messiah came to achieve. Paul did not invent the Doctrine of Justification as a pretext for the Messiah; rather he based it on the Hebrew Bible.

The apparent contradiction between the Apostles Paul and James on the Doctrine of Justification is simply not addressed in the New Testament. This is because Paul and James understood they were not contradicting one another. New research based on Hebraic Meter demonstrates God used Paul to teach the Doctrine of Justification by Faith in the Hebrew Bible to the world.

Jews who could not speak Hebrew after the captivity lost the correct meaning of the two Hebrew words for *heart*. The Septuagint incorrectly translated both words as *heart* when the shorter spelling refers to the quality or nature of the human heart, and the longer spelling refers to the activity or works produced by the human heart. This distinction is maintained in the New Testament with the words *faith* and *works*.

These two different Hebrew words for *heart* repeat 123 times in the Torah and 858 times in the entire Hebrew Bible. Paul is speaking about the shorter spelling while James is speaking about

the longer spelling. There is no contradiction, and Hebrew readers at the time of Paul and James understood that fact. The New Testament Doctrine of Justification by Faith was established in the Hebrew Bible long before the Apostle Paul wrote the book of Romans.

For a detailed explanation see four articles at *RedeemerPress.Org* under *articles*. Contributors to the articles were Rev. Paul Fleischer, Rev. Steven Spencer, Hebrew scholar Karl Randolph, Rev. Ron Scheer, Rev. Luther Esala, Dale King, Rev. Joel Basely, Rev. Jerome Cascione, and Messianic Jewish Hebrew trainer Leena Larson.

This writer admires the Messianic Jews evangelism to Jews by arguing the validity of Jesus as the Christ based on the Hebrew Bible, just as Jesus Himself and the Apostles did. Ultimately all theological roads lead to the chief doctrine of the Bible: Justification by Faith.

Contrary to Messianic Jews, the current Church Growth approach utilized by most Christian denominations is to lead people to believe in Jesus before believing the Bible. Lutherans such as the LCMS and the WELS even go so far as to say that the order of conversion is based on Jesus which is followed by believing the Bible. This return to the error of Marcionism is the basis for a debate between Andy Stanley and Jeff Durbin in the following video.

Andy Stanley vs Jeff Durbin - Unhitching Christianity from the Old Testament?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yji0fqtVEw8>

Our suggestion for reviewing the various videos referenced in this article is to listen to them on your cell phone.

One point, missing from the excellent debate between Stanley and Durbin, is that neither debater argues that the Bible is not just the message of grace but is the chief Means of Grace. The Holy Spirit limits Himself to the inherent power of the word of God alone to achieve the conversion of the human soul. Jesus himself said,

"If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead." (Luke 16:31 NASB)