

Dothan Messianic Fellowship Statement of Faith

1. The Scriptures

We believe that the Scriptures, both the Tenakh (Old Covenant) and the Brit Hadasha (New Covenant, or Messianic Writings), are fully inspired and God's complete and final revelation to man until Messiah returns. We trust God's Word to be infallible and authoritative in every category of knowledge to which they speak, including but not limited to faith, practice, science and history (Proverbs 30:5,6; Isaiah 40:7,8; Jeremiah 31:31; Matthew 5:18; John 10:35; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-21).

2. The Unity of God

We affirm the *Shema* : "Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God, the Lord is One" (Deuteronomy 6:4). This Hebrew word for "one" (echad) implies compound unity. God is one but has manifested Himself in three separate and distinct persons, referring to Himself in plural terms in the Hebrew text. Hence, we believe that God is a Triunity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is the creator of all things. He is infinite and perfect, eternally existing in three equal persons, each possessing the nature and perfections of deity, as well as the characteristics of personality (Genesis 1:26; Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 6:8; Isaiah 48:16; Matthew 28:19; John 6:27; Acts 5:3,4; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Hebrews 1:8).

The Father

We believe He is Father over all creation, and thus its sovereign ruler; Father of Israel, whom He has chosen as His unique people; Father of Messiah Yeshua, whom He sent into the world to redeem mankind and creation; and Father of all who trust in His gracious provision (Exodus 4:22; Isaiah 63:16; Jeremiah 31:9; Matthew 3:17; John 1:12, 3:16; Acts 17:29; Galatians 3:26).

The Son

We believe that God the Son became flesh in the person of Yeshua of Nazareth, the promised Messiah of Israel, Who was conceived of the Spirit of God and born of the Jewish virgin, Miriam (Mary). We believe in His full deity and full humanity, His sinless life, and His miracles (Isaiah 7:14, 9:6,7; Jeremiah 23:5,6; Micah 5:2; Luke 1:26-79; John 1:1,2,14-18).

We believe that Messiah Yeshua died as the substitutionary sacrifice for man's sin and that all who put their trust in Him are declared righteous on the basis of His shed blood alone. Messiah's substitutionary death was the price for our redemption and was foreshadowed in the Tenakh in the slaying of the Passover Lamb, the sin and trespass offerings, and the sin offerings on Yom Kippur. We believe that Yeshua came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets but rather, to add clarity, meaning and depth to them (Leviticus 16:15,16, 17:11; Psalm 22:16; Isaiah 53; Daniel 9:26; Matthew 5:17; Mark 10:45; John 19:30; Romans 3:21-26, 5:8,9; 2 Corinthians 5:14,21; 1 Peter 3:18).

We believe that Messiah Yeshua arose from the dead bodily, ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He serves as our Great High Priest according to the priesthood of Melchizedek. As such, He is intercessor and advocate before the Father on behalf of all believers, and He will come again in glory with authority from the Father to judge the living and the dead (Genesis 14:17-20; Psalm 110:4; Isaiah 11:1-5; Daniel 7:13,14; Zechariah 6:12,13; John 5:22, 27, Acts 1:9-11, 17:31; Romans 8:34; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8; Hebrews 7:1 - 8:2; 1 John 2:1).

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The Holy Spirit

We believe *Ruach HaKodesh* (the Holy Spirit) is a distinct entity Who possesses all the attributes of deity. He does not call attention to Himself and is ever present to glorify and testify of Messiah Yeshua (Job 33:4; Psalm 139:7; John 15:26, 16:13-15; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

We believe that since the beginning, the Spirit of God was active in creating the world and gifting, empowering, and filling selected individuals for specific services to God (Genesis 1:2; Exodus 31:1-5; Numbers 27:18; Judges 6:34; Nehemiah 9:20).

In the Hebrew Scriptures (TENAK), 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 the specific purposes.

In the New Testament, 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). 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.”

We believe the Spirit of God is active today, convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He regenerates, seals, and sets the believer apart to a holy life. At the moment of salvation, each believer is immersed by the Spirit of God into the Body of Messiah and is indwelt by the Spirit of God. Therefore, all believers are complete in Him and possess every spiritual blessing. It is the privilege and responsibility of all believers to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit, thereby manifesting the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. Without the indwelling Spirit, no one can understand or discern spiritual truths (John 14:16,17, 16:7-11; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 2:10-16, 12:13; Galatians 5:16-18, 22, 23; Ephesians 1:13,14, 4:30, 5:18,19; 2 Thessalonians 2:13).

We believe that at salvation, the Holy Spirit imparts at least one spiritual gift to every believer for the purpose of edifying and equipping the Body of Messiah through the local congregation. The Holy Spirit imparts them to each believer as He determines. No one gift is assigned to all believers. The principal manifestation of the Holy Spirit is other-centered love and a longing to be obedient to God’s word (Jer 31). Spiritual gifts are a blessing to the believer for the purpose of building up the Body of Messiah (John 13:35; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 28-30, 13:1-3, 14:12; 1 Peter 4:8-10). We believe the Holy Spirit is the fulfillment of God’s promise to write His Torah on our hearts and on our minds (Jer 31:33).

3. Satan and Demons

Identity

We believe in the reality and personality of Satan, the adversary of God. He is an angelic being who was created by God and given the highest rank and beauty in the company of God’s ministering servants. He exalted himself above God in his pride and persuaded a great company of angels to support his rebellion against God, thus rendering them demons in his own malignant service (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19; 1 Timothy 3:6; 2 Peter 2:4).

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Mission of Satan

We believe that Satan is the perpetrator of evil and the god of this world (Eph 2:2, John 12:31). He and his demons are active in blinding mankind to spiritual truth, inciting anti-Semitism and hostility toward Israel, and attempting to discredit the faithfulness and love of God and His word. Believers can and should resist his destructive attacks by applying Scriptural truth (Genesis 3:2-15; Job 1:6-12, 2:1-10; Matthew 4:1-11; 2 Corinthians 4:3,4, 10:3-5; Ephesians 2:1,2, 6:10-18; Hebrews 4:12-16; James 4:7; 1 Peter 1:13, 5:8-10; Revelation 12:7 - 13:18). Although Satan now influences the non-believing world system, he was judged, though not executed, by Messiah Yeshua's death and resurrection. Although Satan still has access in this world, he will suffer eternal punishment by being cast into the Lake of Fire after the Messiah's one-thousand-year Messianic reign (Isaiah 14:15-20; Ezekiel 28:19; Luke 10:18; Colossians 2:15; Revelation 20:1-10).

4. Angels

We believe a great company of angels remained holy and are ministering servants before the throne of God, praising, worshiping, adoring, and glorifying Him. They are sent forth as special agents to bring about God's intended plans and purposes and to minister to all believers (Isaiah 6:1-7; Daniel 10:10-21; Luke 15:10; Hebrews 1:13,14; Revelation 7:11-12). Angels were consistently used by the Father to minister to His Son, the Messiah, during His first earthly ministry (Matthew 2:13, 4:11, 28:2; Luke 1:26, 2:8, 22:43).

5. Man

We believe that man was created in the image of God. Adam and Eve sinned and consequently experienced not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is the loss of God's eternal life, resulting in separation from God and His presence. As a consequence of this sin, the entire moral and intellectual nature of unredeemed mankind is corrupted (Genesis 6:5,12, 8:21). This sinful nature makes all human beings incapable of raising themselves to the holiness in which God had originally created them. Man's state of sin so infected his will that he is morally unable to choose God's provision of redemption in Messiah Yeshua without the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. The destiny of the unredeemed man is eternal destruction (2 Thessalonians 1:8,9). Man's only hope for redemption (salvation) is through the atonement made by the Messiah Yeshua (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).

6. Redemption

Accomplishment

We believe that anyone who by faith trusts Messiah Yeshua as Redeemer and Lord and repents of his sin is immediately forgiven his sins and becomes a "new creation," born from above. This salvation is not accomplished by any human effort or meritorious act; it is accomplished only by God's grace through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Yeshua the Messiah, which faith is given by God to the believer as a gracious gift (Genesis 15:6; Leviticus 17:11; Deuteronomy 9:4-6; Habakkuk 2:4; John 1:12,13, John 3:3; Acts 2:37-39; Romans 1:16,17, 3:28, 8:9,15-17; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 1:7, 2:8,9,19; Titus 3:5).

Effect

The redemption of man leads to a new birth (John 3:3-6; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15). The result of our spiritual birth is that we become the righteousness of God in Messiah (2 Corinthians 5:21), we become partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), our mind is renewed continuously (Romans 12:2; Colossians 3:10) and our body becomes a

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dwelling place for God's Spirit (Ezekiel. 36:26, 27; 2 Corinthians 3:16; Romans 8:9). Although the regenerated believer still struggles with the power of sin through his flesh, he is free from the strongholds of the Adamic nature and the law of sin and death, and is securely "in Messiah" (Romans 5:17,18, 6:1-11; 7:15-8:2; Galatians 2:20; 1 John. 1:8,9). We believe that all believers are kept eternally secure by the power of God through their new birth, the indwelling and sealing of the Holy Spirit, and the intercession of Messiah Yeshua (Numbers 16:47,48; John 10:28-30, 14:16-18; Romans 8:33-39; Ephesians 4:30; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 2:1).

Enablement

We believe that all believers, though forgiven, still struggle with sin while they are in this life. God, in His mercy and grace, has given the believer, through salvation, the ability to recognize his sin and a heart to confess and repent of it. God enables the believer to understand the Scriptures through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit also reminds the believer of his redeemed identity in Yeshua the Messiah (Numbers 15:37-41; Psalm 51:1-13; Jeremiah 31:33; John 14:26, 17:17; Romans 6:1-11, 7:15-21, 8:1,2, 9-16; 1 Corinthians 2:11-16; 1 John 1:8 - 2:2).

7. The Body of Messiah

Membership

We believe that all believers in Messiah Yeshua are members of the universal Body (community of believers) and Bride of the Messiah. The Body of Messiah began at *Shavuot* (Pentecost) with the immersion in the Holy Spirit after the ascension of Messiah Yeshua. This was the renewal of our wedding vows. Membership in the Body is not based on any earthly organizational affiliation but is based on faith in Messiah. This Body is composed of both Jews and Gentiles made one in Messiah. These members are under the solemn duty to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of love with a pure heart (Exodus 19:12-17; Leviticus 25:17; Matthew 16:15-18; Luke 22:24-27; Acts 1:5, 2:14-36; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 2:11-18, 4:1-3; 5:23-27; Colossians 1:18, 3:14,15).

Ordinance of Immersion

We believe that the ordinance of messianic immersion (*mikvah*, baptism) was instituted by God as an outward sign of the believer's spiritual identification with Yeshua, His death, burial and resurrection, and entrance into the Body of Messiah. We believe this ordinance was directly foreshadowed in Jewish ritual immersion or "t'vilah". By obeying this New Covenant ordinance, the believer conveys the message that, through the Person of Yeshua the Messiah, he has died to sin and been raised in newness of life, a new creation in Him. While immersion is not required for salvation, it is ordained by God for the Body of Messiah and is used as an outward symbol of an inward state of rebirth. (Leviticus 14:8,9; Numbers 19; Isaiah 1:16; Jeremiah 4:14; Matthew 3:1-17, 28:19; Romans 6:1-11; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

8. Israel

Her Identity

We believe Israel is God's special people, distinct from the Body of Messiah, chosen by Him to be a holy nation and a kingdom of priests, despite her partial rejection of Yeshua the Messiah. God will purge Israel of unbelief during the Great Tribulation, the time of "Jacob's trouble," ultimately resulting in her corporate repentance and national acceptance of Yeshua as Messiah and Lord (Exodus 19:5,6; Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12; Jeremiah 30:7; Ezekiel 20:33-44; Zechariah 12:10,11, 13:8,9; Romans 9:4,5, 11:26,27). We believe that those who have professed faith in and been immersed under the authority and teachings of Yeshua of Nazareth are adopted members of Israel and share in the richness, covenants and heritage of her people (Romans 11).

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Her Covenant

We believe the Abrahamic Covenant is an irrevocable, unconditional covenant given to the Jewish people. This covenant provides title to the land of Israel for the Jewish people, promises a descendant (the Messiah) who would come to redeem Israel, and blessing for the entire world through Israel and her Messiah. God will ultimately fulfill every aspect of the covenant in the Messianic Kingdom, both physical and spiritual. At that time, the Jewish people will know God personally through Messiah Yeshua and will possess the entire land of Israel according to its biblical boundaries (Genesis 12:1-3, 15:17-21; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Romans 11:25-29).

We believe Israel's covenant relationship with God does not render her automatic salvation. Therefore, it is the believer's privilege and duty to communicate the good news of Messiah Yeshua to the Jewish people in a bold yet sensitive way. Israel, while beloved of God nationally, is in a state of national sin. For this reason, the Gospel must be brought to her (Genesis 12:3; Numbers 24:9; Jeremiah 31:35-37; Ezekiel 36:22-28; Matthew 3:7-9, 28:18-20; John 4:22; Acts 13:46; Romans 1:16).

9. The Believer and The Law of Moses (Torah)

Torah (תּוֹרָה) is a Hebrew word meaning "teaching," "instruction," or "law". It is the central and most important document of Judaism revered by Jews through the ages. It is also called the Law of Moses. Torah refers to the first five books of the Bible.

The revelatory instructions, which God handed down to the children of Israel through Moses represent God's perfect, objective standard of righteousness. This standard has never and will never change. Insofar as the Law reflects God's character, it is not limited to any particular dispensation.

According to the Scriptures, the Law of Moses serves to:

- provide a national constitution for Israel, including maxims of order and priority (Deuteronomy 4:1,2);
- distinguish the nation Israel as a covenant people (Ezekiel 36:27,28);
- protect and preserve, both in a physical sense and in a spiritual sense (Deuteronomy 4; Galatians 3:19-24); and
- define and highlight personal sin (Romans 7:7-13).

The believer is obligated to obey all the ordinances contained therein, or none of them, for they comprise one whole Law. The Law itself pronounced a curse on any who might fall short of perfect obedience (Deuteronomy 27:26; Galatians 3:10; James 2:10). The Messianic believer is not cursed for transgressing any point of the Law of Moses, for Messiah Yeshua took that curse upon Himself, thereby freeing us from the condemnation of disobeying the Law. We have obtained right standing before God on the basis of Yeshua's perfect Law-obedience and our faith-identification with Him (Romans 6:1-11, 8:1-4, 10:4; Galatians 3:13).

Clearly, no one is justified in the sight of God by works of the Law. For Jewish believers, however, the Law of Moses provides a Biblical means of expressing his God-given Jewish identity which, in turn, provides a universal testimony of God's faithfulness. For Gentile believers, the Law of Moses provides opportunities to discover and enjoy the roots of their redemption and to identify with the Jewish community for the purpose of revealing the riches of Messiah. As a Messianic Jewish congregation, our normative operation includes the weekly observance of Shabbat as well as the annual prophetic convocations prescribed in Torah (Genesis 12:1-3; Leviticus 23; Deuteronomy 26:16-19; Isaiah 44:1-5; Matthew 5:17,18; Romans 6:14, 8:1,2, 10:4; 1 Corinthians 9:20; Galatians 3:3-11, 6:2; Ephesians 2:14,15; Colossians 2:16,17).