

Oasis

WHAT IS THE ONE NEW MAN?

Wall of separation that limited Gentile access to the Temple

Model of the 1st century temple (wikiphoto by J. Cuadro)

“For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in

one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father” (Ephesians 2:14-17).

Just what IS the one new man? The phrase is being used so much now it’s

difficult to locate the original intent of its author, Shaul the Shaliach (Paul the Apostle), in his epistle to the Ephesians.

To illustrate the relevance and immediacy of this question, I just returned from a five day consultation on this subject, held in Europe, involving representatives from numerous cities around the world. These ministry

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leaders are grappling with several issues emerging from two remarkable developments of the last 40 plus years. One development is that Jews are again following Jesus and living a biblically Jewish life - in numbers far greater than at any time since the first century. This historic (and I would add, prophetic) trend has led to a second development within some portions of the worldwide body of Messiah. Christians are being drawn to investigate the Hebraic background of the New Testament. Jesus and His disciples were incontestably Jewish, native citizens of Israel in the first century. An unbiased reading of Scripture makes it clear that they lived, celebrated, and worshiped in the context of normative Jewish life, based on the Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy) and the Prophets.

OK, until now no huge controversy. The problem arises, however, when Gentile believers - enthusiastic about this restoration of the "Jewish roots" of the New Covenant - want to enter the life practices of the first apostles, and begin adopting the framework of Torah as their own. To play with the term... Is this kosher?

What is the Context?

First, it's always appropriate to check the context of a Bible passage in order to grasp its intent. The "one new man" phrase occurs in Ephesians 2:15. The apostle is addressing Gentile believers, reminding them that they were once **"without Messiah, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world"** (Ephesians 2:11, 12). This statement alone links the salvation of the nations (Gentiles) to God's divine order of bringing salvation through Israel. It is a strong reminder, similar to that found in Romans 11:18: **"...remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you."**

Next comes the (especially in the first century) monumental announcement in verse 14, that Yeshua **"has broken down the middle wall of separation."** This can be seen as a reference to the barrier in the Temple precinct physically separating Jew and Gentile, keeping the Gentile excluded from the inner courtyard. The author, a renowned rabbi of his era, attributes this reconciliation to the crucifixion of the Messiah. He identifies the **"law of the commandment"** as the **"enmity"** being removed (Ephesians 2:15) from between Jew and Gentile. He is not calling the law an enemy. Rather, he is referring to the Gentiles being released from Israel's obligation to abide by that law. Paul brilliantly applies the conclusion of the Acts 15 council.

What is the Mystery?

In the following chapter, Paul terms this phenomenon a "mystery" of the ages, and defines the mystery as Jews and Gentiles being **"fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Messiah through the gospel"** (Ephesians 3:4, 6). The One New Man is us together - His united *body*. The language is crystal clear about our *joint*

position of Kingdom citizens and *heirs* of eternal life through faith in Yeshua. What is less clear is: "How Jewish is the Gentile man within the one new man; and how Gentile is the Jewish man within the one new man?"

Here, the Jerusalem Council decision is helpful. In that historic discussion, the apostles and elders concluded that the Gentile believers were not obligated to observe the Law of Moses. OK, not obligated. That's clear. So, apparently the difference in our practices (holidays, diet, etc.) are not something that separates us. The Gentile does not become Jewish, nor the Jew become Gentilish - **"Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised"** (1 Corinthians 7:18). Our full fellowship is not based on the outward aspects of celebrating our faith, but rather on the priceless blood of our Messiah.

Then how are we to walk out this full fellowship? It is again a matter of calling. There are non-Jewish disciples who are called to participate in Messianic Jewish congregations either in the Diaspora or in Israel. In such cases, the vision of the specific congregation will guide the worshiper, while there is yet no need to formally "convert." At the same time, a Jewish believer needs to feel at home in any assembly of Yeshua followers in the world. In that Christian church, he can enjoy the rich, common life of the Spirit, while his Biblical calling as an "Israelite" is not being threatened.

The Lord's Feasts Express our Oneness

I believe that a key to walking together as the "one new man" is the biblical framework of the feasts of the Lord, as set forth in Leviticus 23. While these celebrations are overtly given to *"b'nai Yisrael,"* the children of Israel, God also weaves them into the whole fabric of Scripture. Yeshua's first century disciples celebrated these feasts with Him and each one has a Messianic fulfillment in addition to its original purpose in commemorating Israel's history.

By discovering these twin applications of the feasts, the New Testament believer can enjoy the ancient roots of his faith without adhering to all 613 Mosaic commandments. Through the seven seasonal feasts (with Shabbat preceding all of them), we are able to rejoice together in God's great provision.

While the above may still leave specific questions unanswered, it is offered in hopes of providing basic clarity. The exciting thing is that God has brought back the Messianic Jews, as natural branches re-ingrafted (per Romans 11:16-24). This brings resurrection power to the world-wide Church (Romans 11:15) and is a signal of Yeshua's soon return (Matthew 23:39). ✨

For further exploration of this subject, please make use of Eitan's book "What About Us? - The end-time calling of Gentiles in Israel's Revival." It can be ordered on Amazon: <http://www.amazon.com/What-About-Us-Eitan-Shishkoff>



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FIELDS *of* WHEAT

GALILEE HOSPITALITY VILLAGE

What if? What if there could be a place in Israel, a portion of the land, that was set aside for the use of all Yeshua's congregations—both Jewish and Arab? What if there was room for recreation and camps and conferences and retreats? What if it was owned and staffed by a non-profit entity of local believers, aided by volunteers from the nations, fostering an atmosphere of loving hospitality with daily worship and prayer? What if the guests hosted included our believing brothers and sisters from the nations.

If the answer to all the above is *"That would be amazing, unique, timely—a new stage in Israel's restoration,"* then it leads us to the next question. *Why not?* Why not take steps to locate such a place and believe that God, who said "the earth is mine and the fullness thereof," would be pleased to author such a venture?

These are the exact questions that arose in us several years ago and we have not been able to shake them off. Consequently we began scouting to see if any suitable property might be available. All the while we've known that it would take a long string of miracles to pull it off.

Well, those miracles have begun. We'll have to reserve future space in this publication to chronicle the journey, but at this stage we are

rolling toward the fulfillment of this dream. It has gained a name: Fields of Wheat. It is registered as a new, national non-profit organization in Israel. And the dream has begun to take shape to create a hospitality village in the Galilee.

Here are our five purposes:

1. SERVING Israel's Jewish and Arab congregations. A venue for youth and children's camps, congregational retreats, equipping conferences, family training, unity initiatives and more.

2. UNITING Yeshua's disciples in a kingdom expression of the joint destiny of Israel and the nations through fellowship and mutual service. Experiencing home away from home.

3. CULTIVATING an atmosphere of worship and prayer for staff, volunteers and guests, featuring a prayer vista room, prayer paths and gardens. Plowing the ground for spiritual breakthrough.

4. WELCOMING Israel's returning exiles back to the land. A practical outreach in prophetic fulfillment of Isaiah 49:22.

5. DISCIPLING day-to-day staff and volunteers both local and international. Living a community lifestyle of Word, worship and work.

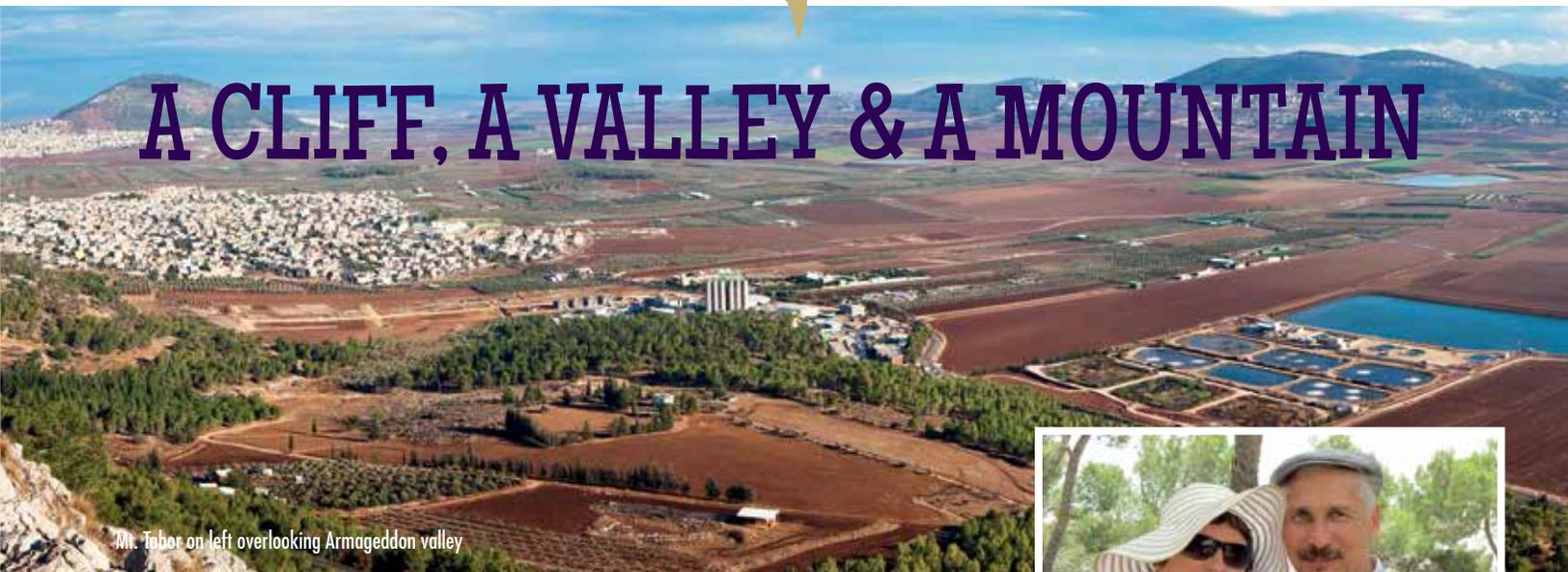
Please join us in praying through to the full realization of this vision to equip His children to bear good fruit. ✨



"Look at the fields for they are already white for harvest."

John 4:35

A CLIFF, A VALLEY & A MOUNTAIN



Mt. Tabor on left overlooking Armageddon valley



Tatiana and Vakif

On Shavuot 2015 four communities of Jewish believers in Yeshua the Messiah came together in Upper Nazareth, and the Lord answered our prayers. We experienced the wondrous presence of the Holy Spirit and enjoyed the fellowship of being one - the Lord's body!

As we gathered in a park at the edge of the city with its beautiful cliff-valley-mountain view, I received a revelation. I can hardly articulate the excitement I feel as I recount this to you. So I invite you personally to visit us and experience the same feelings that I received from the Lord on Shavuot:

1. We stood in Nazareth, where Yeshua lived on Earth.

2. *To the right* we could see the top of the cliff. The people of Nazareth, Yeshua's friends and neighbors with whom he grew up, were offended at His words, not accepting him as Messiah. In rebellious human pride, they **"were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the**

hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way" (Luke 4:30).

To this day something in the human heart is still trying to *throw Him over the cliff* and continue to live after our own lusts and pride.

3. *To the left* we could see Mount Tabor, the Mount of Transfiguration referred to in Luke 9. There Yeshua was transformed, and three of His disciples heard a voice from the sky, **"This is my beloved Son, listen to Him!"** The desire of the Lord is that we will know Him, see His essence, experience His reality and bow before Him. God wants to reveal Himself as a Father to us, and to dwell with us.

4. *Between the cliff and the mountain* we could see the Valley of Armageddon, where the last battle will take place (Revelation 16:16; often called Jezreel Valley). It is the final place where the faith of God's people will be tested and the Lord will gain His victory.

In going from the cliff to the Mount of Transfiguration we cannot avoid passing through the valley, though the distance separating them is only a few kilometers. Likewise we cannot see the victory of God in our lives, we cannot know the Lord as our Father, and we cannot enter into His house - unless we pass through the valley. This battle in the valley is also a part of life, a conflict we cannot avoid. The battle tests our faith and our trust in God, and the victory is won.

I invite you to come down from the cliff of human pride, through the valley of testings and victory to reach the Mount of Transfiguration! ✨

By VAKIF Return to Zion &
Branch of Galilee Congregation, Nazareth



Shavuot gathering in Upper Nazareth