

Torah for Today?

Edited and adapted from The Bridge Messianic Fellowship in Idaho

Introduction:

As a Messianic congregation, one of our bedrock beliefs is the importance of Scripture. We believe the *entire* Bible is valid and valuable for *all* people throughout history. The Messianic movement has a large number of Gentiles who have felt **called** by God to this lifestyle and walking out of Scripture.

At The Olive Tree, our approach is one of walking out Scripture out of our deep love for the Lord. To the best of our ability, we keep the Sabbath, the Feasts, and dietary instructions because we see them as an extension of God's own self and His ideal standard for the lives of His people.

But we do not believe in "legalism" which is defined as attempting to earn one's salvation or good standing via works. At The Olive Tree, and throughout the established Messianic Jewish community, we do not keep the Torah to *earn* our salvation. We because we are led and **called** by God to do so.

Obligation to Torah:

There is an ongoing discussion in the greater Messianic community regarding the *obligation* of Torah to the Jewish people and to Gentiles. This topic can be a difficult issue.

The Olive Tree is a part of the IAMCS/MJAA (Messianic Jewish Alliance of America), which is the oldest Messianic Jewish organization in the world. It, along with the UMJC (Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations), believe that based on Scripture, Gentiles are not covenantally-bound to the entire Torah. We recommend a paper from the MJAA titled "[One Law, Two Sticks](#)."

Our approach to the Torah is one of trying to walk out God's Word out of our deep love for Him. We attempt to the best of our ability to keep the Sabbath, the Feasts, and kosher dietary standards because they are God's precious words to His people, His holy design for godly life.

It is important to us that we do not practice a form of "Messianic replacement theology," which happens when Gentiles assume the same identity as Jews. We recognize that God's plan for humanity requires both Jew and Gentile walking in the roles that God has given to them. We also do not believe that this creates "first- and second-class citizens," any more than we believe that the differences between men & women make women second-class citizens.

Our heart here is that we seek God and do our best to honor Him with our lives. We are each on a unique journey and we are each responsible to God for how we obey His Word in our lives. Our question is not, "How much do I *have* to do?" but rather, "How can I *best love* God with my life?" By keeping our eyes on Him and approaching Scripture this way, we maintain unity in our community. We don't believe that this topic should be divisive, but rather unifying as we all seek to build each other up with a foundation of love for God and respect for one another.