



The
Great
Story

LIVE A
GREAT
STORY

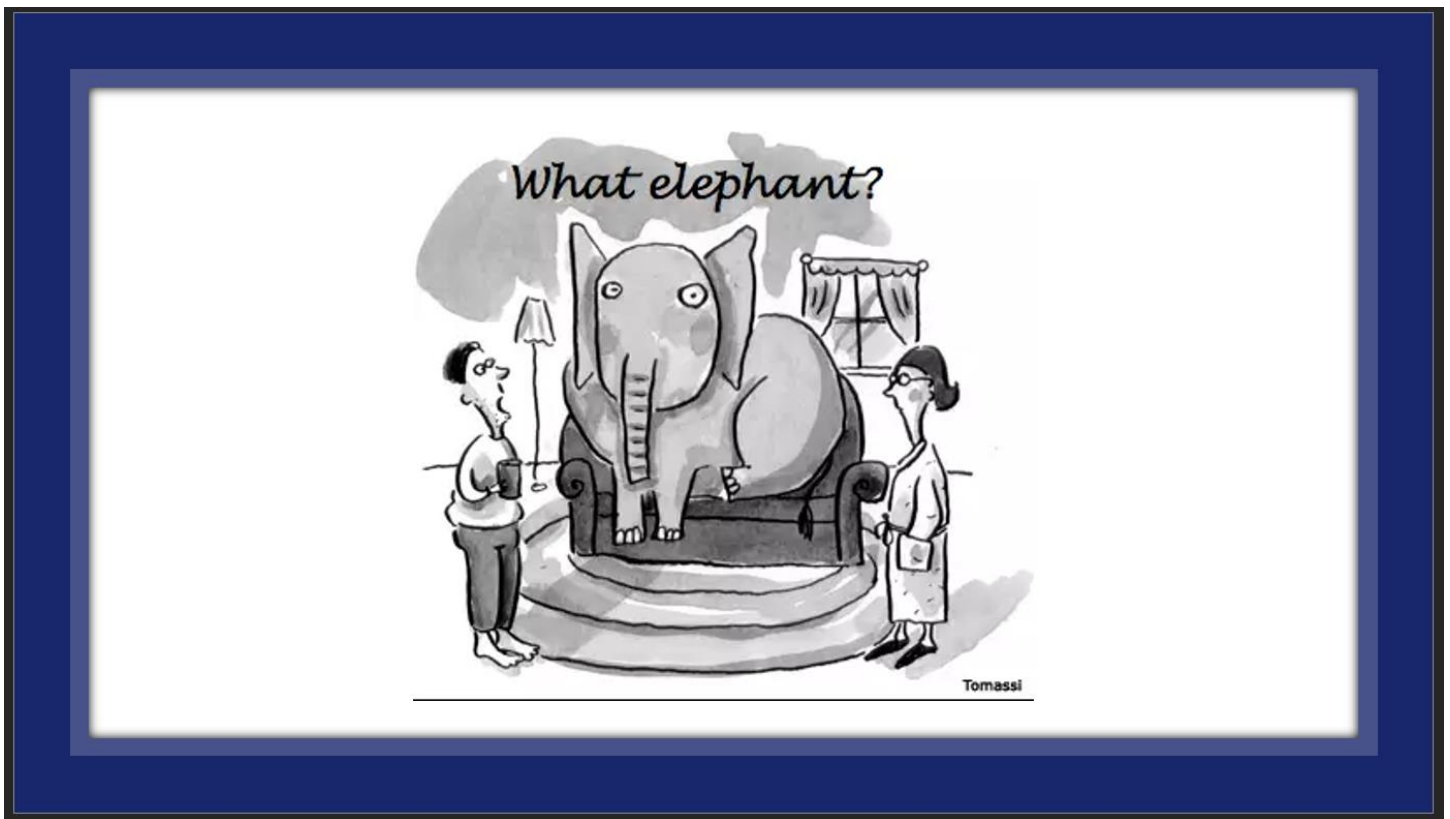
Finding Mashiah

(G_d's Messiah)

apology

As we begin this presentation together, I first want to apologize to my Jewish neighbors for all the harm that has been done to them over the centuries by persons who claimed to be followers of Yeshua. I am grieved by these terrible wrongs, not only because of the evil and suffering they have caused, but also because that suffering has made it much more difficult to hear Yeshua's message of love.

In this presentation, I will speak of "Jesus" as "Yeshua," and of "Christians" as "followers of Yeshua." "Jesus" is a Greek name, while "Yeshua" is the Jewish name by which his family, friends, and *talmidim* (disciples) knew him.



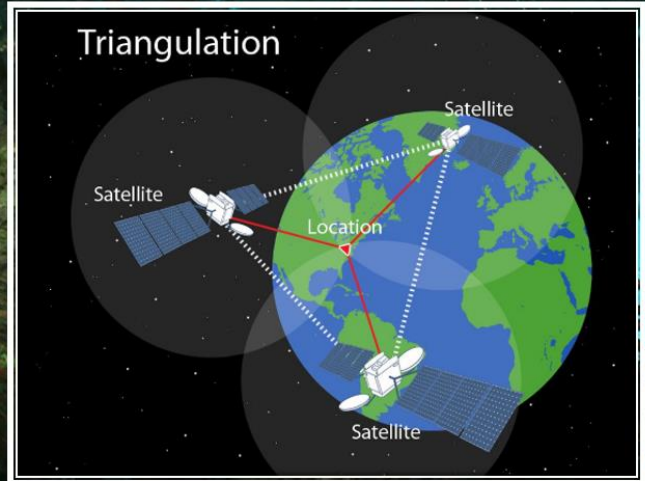
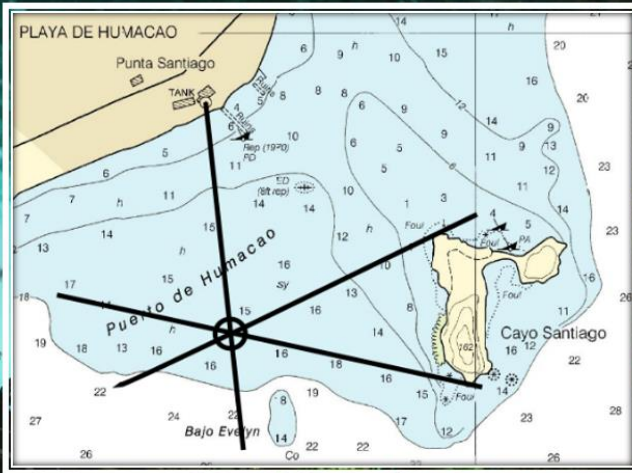
This presentation grew out of an invitation from Rabbi Sonya Starr of the Columbia Jewish Congregation (CJC) to talk to their youth group about “what Christians believe and why they believe it.” This presentation was one of several that the CJC youth experienced as they explored the faith of their neighbors.

I began my preparation for this presentation by making a list of possible topics, trying to identify those beliefs that are central for all followers of Yeshua, and avoiding those beliefs unique to some subgroup, such as Baptists. This eventually led to my writing the companion piece to this document, “Live a Great Story: A Retelling of the Biblical Story.”

I asked my good friend, Rabbi Seth Bernstein, of Bet Aviv Congregation, to read that document to be sure I was not expressing myself in a way that was offensive or disrespectful. Seth’s response was that “The elephant in any room where Christians and Jews are talking about faith is why some of us believe that Jesus is G_d’s Messiah and some of us don’t believe that. I think you should talk about why you think Jesus is the Messiah.”

Seth’s very helpful counsel helped me pare down and reorganize the “Live a Great Story” material into this “Finding Mashiach” presentation

Determining where you are . . .



The guiding metaphor for this presentation grew out of my experience as a naval officer in the 1970's. In those days, GPS was in its infancy and was only available to vessels and facilities with the ability to launch nuclear missiles. The surface Navy still navigated using LORAN, and in restricted waters, we used visual sightings, as illustrated in the chart on the left.

By taking simultaneous visual lines of bearing on known locations, the ship's location is that point at which those lines of bearing intersect. The GPS system locates your cell phone in the very same way today—with lines of bearing to geosynchronous satellites.

In this presentation, we will consider a number of "lines of bearing" to see where they intersect in "finding Mashiach." Page numbers will indicate where topics are discussed in "The Great Story."





Finding Mashiach: Converging Lines of Evidence

- 1. The Foreshadowing (B'resheet 3:15)**
2. Messianic Prophecy
(54 lines of evidence; see appendix)

Our first line of bearing is found in B'resheet/Genesis. When ADONAI created the earth, he placed Adam and Havah/Eve in the Garden of Eden, where all of their needs were met. The earth produced food and fruit of all kinds to provide pleasure and nourishment.

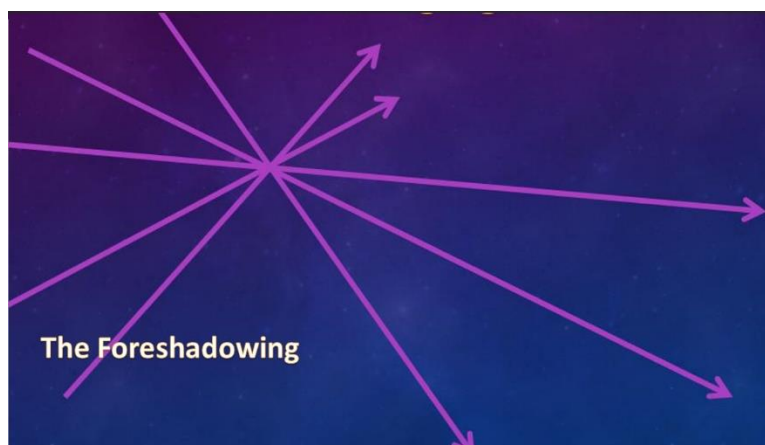
There were two special trees in the Garden among all the others. In the center of the Garden stood The Tree of Life, which Adam and Havah were welcome to eat. Somewhere else in the Garden stood The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, which they were forbidden to eat.

After a creature identified as “the serpent” deceived Adam and Havah into eating from the forbidden tree, severe outcomes followed (p. 3); but in passing judgment on Adam, Havah and the serpent, ADONAI also gave a foreshadowing of how reconciliation would finally be made

*“I will put animosity between you and the woman,
and between your descendant and her descendant;
he will bruise your head, and you will bruise his heel”
(B’resheet 3:15).*

masculine singular

Part of G_d’s judgment on the serpent involved future conflict with a descendant of the woman. The nouns and pronouns in this judgment are all masculine singular, and foreshadow the reality that although the serpent—whom the Bible will later identify as Satan (Revelation 20:2)—will wound this Descendant, this Descendant—who is G_d’s Mashiach, Redeemer, and Anointed One—will crush the serpent and restore the close relationship between G_d and humankind that has now been destroyed (p. 4).



Finding Mashiach: Converging Lines of Evidence

1. The Foreshadowing (B' resheet 3:15)
2. **Messianic Prophecy**
(54 lines of evidence; see appendix)

The Bible tells us that *ADONAI, G_d, does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets* ('Amos 3:7), and ADONAI gave literally dozens of prophecies that would help to identify Mashiach when he came. Although these prophecies are grouped together here as just one "line of bearing," we could legitimately consider each of the 54 prophecies listed in the appendix to *Live A Great Story* as a separate line of bearing (p. 10; appendix).

The table lists where a particular prophecy was given in the *Tanakh* as well as where it was fulfilled in the *B'rit Hadashah* (New Covenant). You are encouraged to look up each reference and make your own decision about whether the claim to fulfillment is justified. Please also note the calculations on the last page of how likely it is that these prophecies could have been fulfilled by random processes rather than by the hand of G_d.



FINDING GOD'S MESSIAH ¹		
Prophecy: The Messiah must ...	Source in the Tanakh	Fulfillment in the B'rit Hadashah
1. Be the "seed of the woman" that would "bruise" or "crush" the serpent's "head"	Genesis 3:15	Galatians 4:4 1 John 3:8
2. Be the "seed of Abraham"	Genesis 12:3	Matthew 1:1; Acts 3:25; Galatians 3:16
3. Be the "seed of Yitzchak"	Genesis 17:19, 21:12	Matthew 1:2; Luke 3:34; Hebrews 11:17, 19
4. Be the "seed of Ya'akov" and the "star out of Ya'akov" who will "rule dominion"	Genesis 28:14; Numbers 24:17, 19	Matthew 1:2; Luke 3:33; Hebrews 7:14
5. Be a descendant of Yitshak	Genesis 49:10	Matthew 1:2-3; Luke 3:33; Hebrews 7:14
6. Be a descendant of David and born in his throne	2 Samuel 7:12-13; Isaiah 9:6 (7:11); 1:5; Jeremiah 23:5	Matthew 1:1, 6; Acts 13:22-23; Romans 1:3
7. Have eternal existence	Micah 5:1 (2)	John 1:1, 14, 9:5; Ephesians 1:3-4; Colossians 1:15-19; Revelation 1:8
8. Be the Son of God	Psalm 2:7; Proverbs 30:4	Matthew 3:17; Luke 1:32
9. Have God's own Name, Yeh-Yeh-Yeh-Jeh, applied to him	Isaiah 9:5-6 (6-7); Jeremiah 23:5-6	Philippians 2:9-11
10. Come after 7 years (483 years after the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem)	Daniel 9:24-26	Matthew 2:1, 16, 19; Luke 3:1, 23
11. Be born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:18-21; Luke 1:26-35
12. Be born in Beth Lechem, in Yitshak	Micah 5:1 (2)	Matthew 2:1; Luke 2:4-7
13. Be adored by great nations	Psalm 72:10-11	Matthew 2:1-11
14. Be provided for one who would announce him	Isaiah 60:3-5; Malachi 3:1	Matthew 3:1-3; Luke 1:17, 3:2-6
15. Be anointed with the Spirit of God	Isaiah 11:2, 61:1; Psalm 45:7	Matthew 3:16; John 3:34; Acts 10:38
16. Be a prophet like Moshe	Deuteronomy 18:15, 18	Acts 3:20-22
17. Have a ministry of binding up the brokenhearted, proclaiming liberty to the captives, and announcing the acceptable year of the Lord	Isaiah 61:1-2	Luke 4:18-19

¹ This table is from: *The Complete Jewish Study Bible: Insights for Jews & Christians: Illuminating the Journeys of God's Word* (Hershey, PA: Palmyra, MA, 2016), pp. iii-iv.
² The Hebrew word "yigdal" in Isaiah 7:16 means "to bring someone" and in the context of the Tanakh always "to bring someone of uncleaned reputation," which is why the Jewish translation of the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Tanakh prepared 300 years before Yitshak's birth, rendered this word into Greek as "parthenos," "virgin"; this is the word used in Matthew 1:23.

Finding Mashiach: Converging Lines of Evidence

3. **Migdal 'Eder** (Mashiach's Birthplace)
(B'resheet 35:21; Mikhah 4:8, 5:1)
4. Dani'el's Vision of 7's (Dani'el 9:25-26)

A most interesting line of bearing occurs in B'resheet 35:21, where Israel buries his wife, Rachel, near Beit-Lechem (Bethlehem), and near Migdal 'Eder, or "The Tower of the Flocks" (p. 6). Some 800 years later, when Solomon built the First Temple in Jerusalem, just down the road from Beit-Lechem, the flocks of sheep that would become "perfect sacrifices" in the Temple were birthed and raised near Migdal 'Eder, which had become the watchtower for the Temple shepherds.

Migdal 'Eder also had a birthing stall in which those sacrificial animals were born, and the prophet Mikhah and several Targums identified this as the place from which Mashiach would come. The Temple shepherds had been using that birthing stall for 1,000 years when it became the place that Mashiach—G_d's Perfect & Final Sacrifice—was born (Luke 2:6-7, 11-12).

Finding Mashiach: Converging Lines of Evidence

3. Migdal 'Eder (B'resheet 35:21; Mikhah 5:1)
4. **Dani'el's Vision of 7's (Dani'el 9:25-26)**
(The Year of Mashiach's Death)

In the apocalyptic section of Dani'el's prophecy, ADONAI revealed the year in which Mashiach would be sacrificed (pp. 10-11).

The calculation works out like this:

$7 \times 7 = 49$ years
 $7 \times 62 = 434$ years
 $49 + 434 = 483$ years
 $483 \text{ years} \times \text{the } 360\text{-day lunar year} = 173,880 \text{ days}$
 $173,880 \text{ days} / \text{the } 365.24\text{-day solar year} =$
 $476 \text{ years in our calendar system}$
 $444 \text{ BCE} + 476 \text{ years} = \mathbf{33 \text{ C.E.}}$ (there was no year zero)

**Yeshua was killed on the execution stake
on Friday, 3 April, 33 C.E.**

Dani'el's Vision of 7's

Finding Mashiach: Converging Lines of Evidence

5. Yo'el's Prophecy (The Signs of Mashiach's Death) (Yo'el 3:1-5; Acts 2:17-22)

- A terrifying and unnatural darkness
- A great earthquake
- The moon "turned to blood"

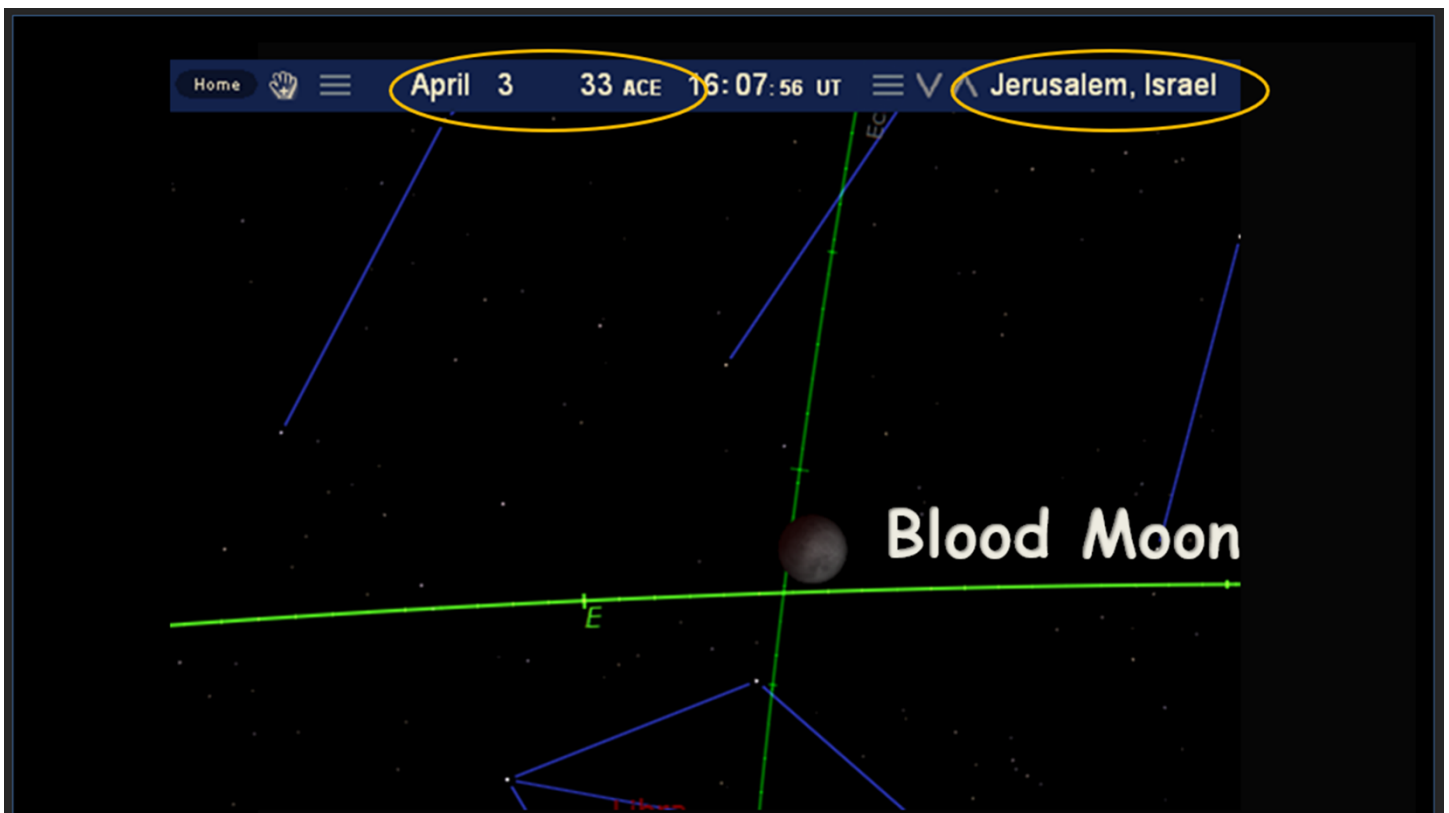
Our fifth line of bearing comes from the prophet Yo'el (pp. 11-12). Yo'el prophesied that at the time of Mashiach's sacrificial death, G_d's *Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit) would be given in new ways, that there would be wonders in the earth and in the sky, that the sun would become dark that the moon would "turn into blood."

At noon on the Passover of 3 April, 33 C.E., the sun was blotted out for three hours as Mashiach died, much like the plague of darkness G_d had brought upon Egypt through Moshe (Moses). At the moment that Mashiach Yeshua died, there was a great earthquake that rocked Yerushalayim (Jerusalem); and when the moon came up that night, it was already a "blood moon" in full eclipse.



*“The **sun will become dark and the moon blood** before the great and fearful Day of ADONAI comes. And then, whoever calls on the name of ADONAI will be saved.”*

*“Men of Isra’el! Listen to this! Yeshua from Natzeret was a man demonstrated to you to have been from God by the powerful works, miracles and signs that God performed through him in your presence.
You yourselves know this” (Acts 2:20-22).*



Finding Mashiach: Converging Lines of Evidence



6. **Moriyah (B'reshheet 22:2)** (The Location of Mashiach's Death)

- The **Akedah** (B'reshheet 22:2)
- **Aravnah** (Sh'mu'el Bet 24:17-25)
- First & Second **Temples** (Divrei-Hayamim Bet 3:1)
- **ADONAI** (Yesha'yahu 53)

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Through the prophets, ADONAI told us where Mashiach would be born, and when; and where Mashiach would be sacrificed, and when that would happen. The location for Mashiach's sacrifice is especially moving (pp. 5-6).

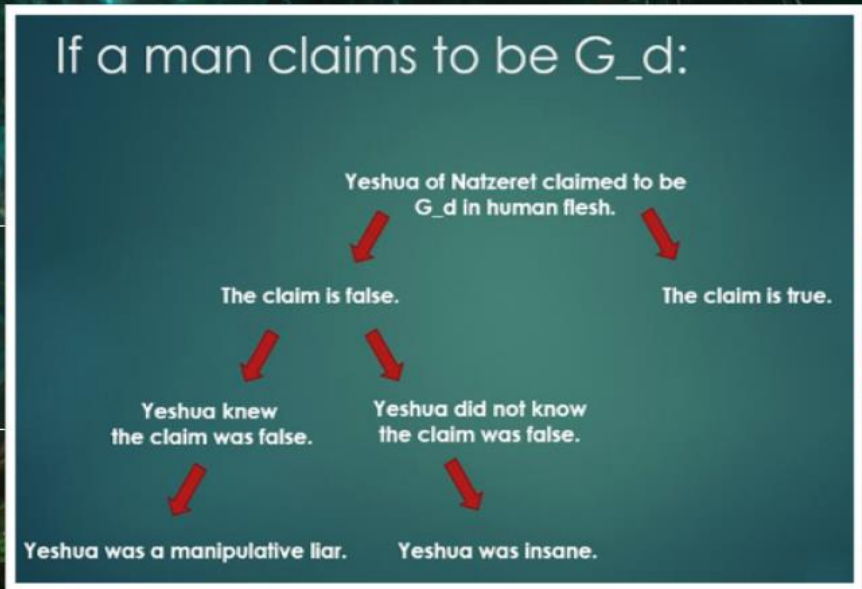
When ADONAI sent Avraham (Abraham) to sacrifice Yitz'chak (Isaac) on Mount Moriah, ADONAI provided a ram for the sacrifice once Avraham had passed the test. Centuries later, in the time of David, G_d stopped a destroying angel's plague at the threshing floor of Aravnah (Araunah), which was also located on Mount Moriah. Both the First and Second Temples were built at that location, and Mashiach Yeshua's sacrifice of atonement occurred on that same spot.



Finding Mashiach: Converging Lines of Evidence

Yeshua's Claim

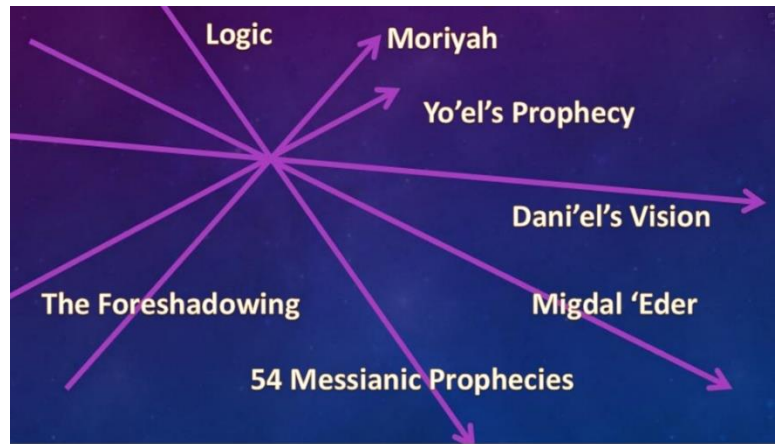
7. The Evidence of Logic



Yeshua was killed on the execution stake because he claimed to be G_d's promised Mashiach, very G_d of very G_d (Dani'el 7:13; Mattityahu [Matthew] 26:62-68; Mark 14:60-64).

Now if a person claims to be G_d, that claim can only be true or false. If the claim is false, and the person making the claim is unaware that it is false, then we consider such a person insane. If the claim is false and the person making the claim is aware that it is false, then that person is a manipulative liar, a false Mashiach. But if the person making such a claim does not appear to be either insane or a manipulative liar, then the only logical option remaining is that the person is telling the truth, no matter how unlikely such a thing might seem to be.

The choice we each have to make with respect to Yeshua is to examine the available evidence and to decide which of these options seems borne out by the evidence.



8. The Final Line of Evidence: *We Know Him.*

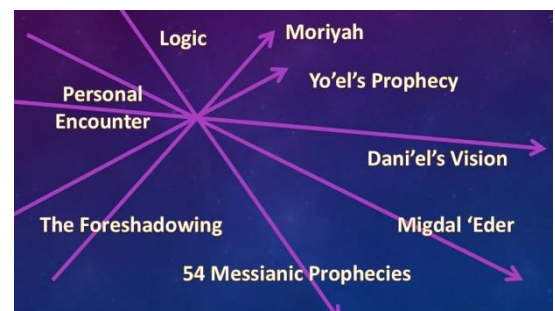
Personal Encounter

Cazadero, 7.70
Georgetown, 3.72
Memphis, 12.79
Louisville, 11.85
Louisville, 10.90
Louisville, 12.99
Louisville, 6.00
Louisville, 6.01
Bristol, 10.11

Our final line of bearing also has many constituent vectors—*billions*, in fact. From the morning of Yeshua’s resurrection to this very moment, billions of persons from every tribe, language, people, and nation have testified that Yeshua is alive, and that they—that we—know him. Countless thousands of followers of Yeshua have been willing to be killed rather than to deny that Yeshua is alive.

Our relationship with Yeshua and our conversation with him takes place through G_d’s *Ruach HaKodesh* and is most often experienced much like Eliyahu (Elijah) experienced ADONAI’s quiet, subdued Voice on Mount Horev (Horeb; M’lakhim Alef [1 Kings]: 19:12; pp. 13-14). Most of the time, this conversation is experienced as spiritual promptings or “nudges”; but sometimes, ADONAI speaks in ways that feel quite audible and intense.

I myself have had at least nine such experiences at the times and places listed above, and I can describe them in specific detail. After all, if the G_d of the universe says something to you, you should write it down!



ISSUES

Blood Atonement

(Vayikra 17:11; Yesha'yahu 53)

Composite Unity

(B'reshet 1, 3; Yesha'yahu 48:16;
Mishlei 30:4; Mark 12:29-30;
Yochanan 14:9, 15-18, 10:30)

The Messianic Age

(Yesha'yahu 2:2-4, 11:6-9;
Mattityahu 24:4-14, 30-31, 28:16-20)

In the end, the only thing that will finally convince anyone that Yeshua is alive and is G_d's Mashiach is to meet him yourself. No piling up of evidence, no matter how overwhelming, can compel belief like *personal encounter* will do (see Acts 9:1-22).

At the same time, there are a number of minor objections that can be raised against this assertion, and there are at least three major objections. We will consider the major objections here. These major objections have to do with:

1. G_d's Mashiach was/is not expected to die, and especially not to die a bloody and shameful death.
2. The Sh'ma (Shema; D'varim [Deuteronomy] 6:4, p. 8) affirms that **ADONAI our G_d, ADONAI is ONE**, and the idea of the "composite unity" of G_d as ADONAI, Mashiach, and *Ruach HaKodesh* seems to be at odds with monotheism.
3. Yesha'yahu (Isaiah) prophesied a glorious, peaceful Messianic Age that would attend Mashiach's coming (2:2-4, 11:6-9), and that has obviously not happened yet.

Atonement

YOM KIPPUR



Vayikra 16-17

I began work on this document on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. I imagine that you know that on this day, once a year, Isra'el's High Priest entered the Most Holy Place in the Tabernacle or the Temple to make blood atonement for his own sins and for the sins of the people (pp. 12-13).

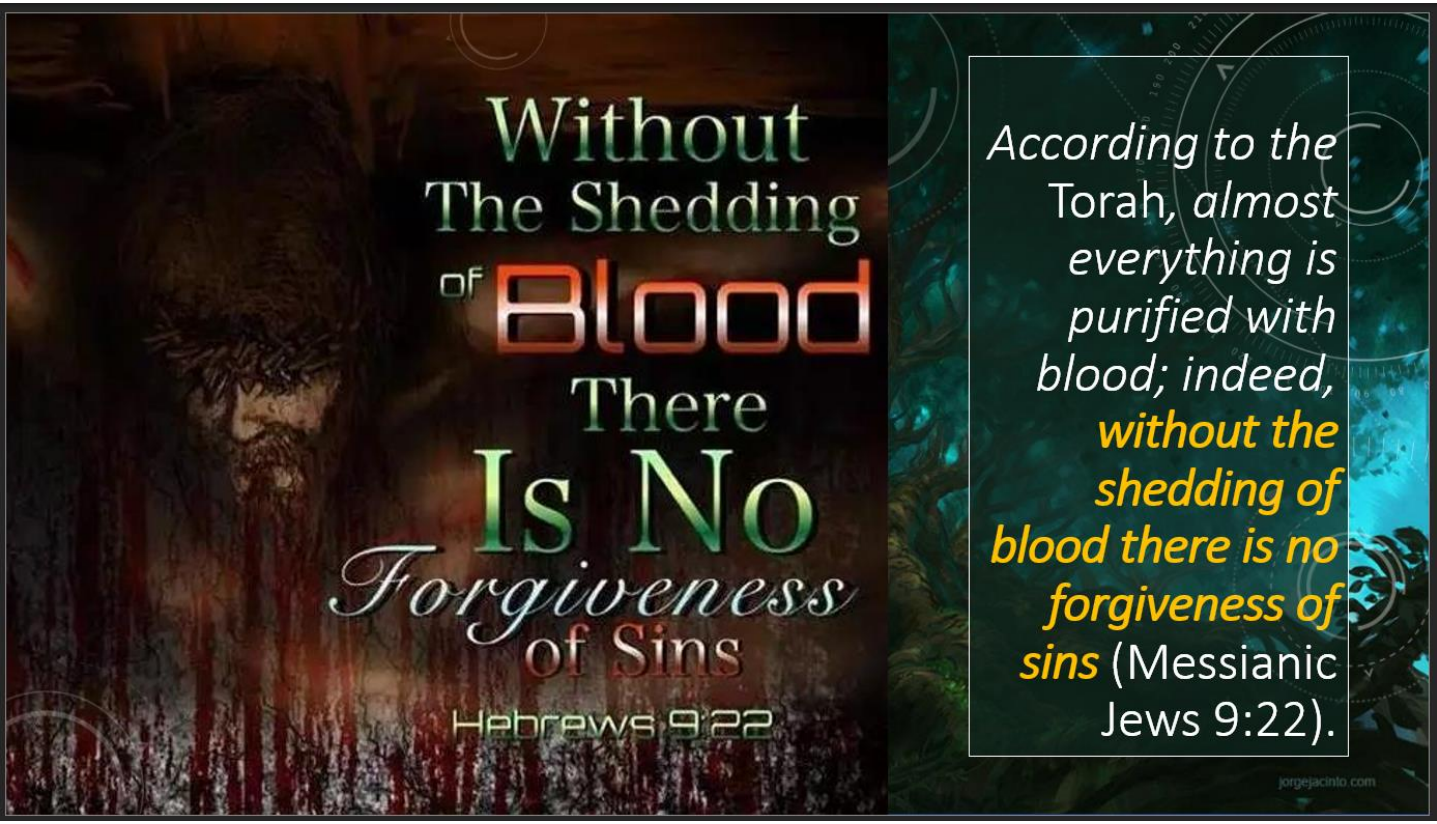
While I don't like the idea of blood atonement, ADONAI is very clear in the Bible that it is **blood** that makes atonement for our Sin. And since this is ADONAI's universe, not ours, we don't get to make the rules. The slides on the next page remind us of this fact.



Blood Atonement

- Remember that ADONAI told Moshe, *“the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for yourselves; for it is the blood that makes atonement because of the life”* (Vayikra [Leviticus] 17:11).

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Without
The Shedding
of **Blood**
There
Is No
Forgiveness
of Sins

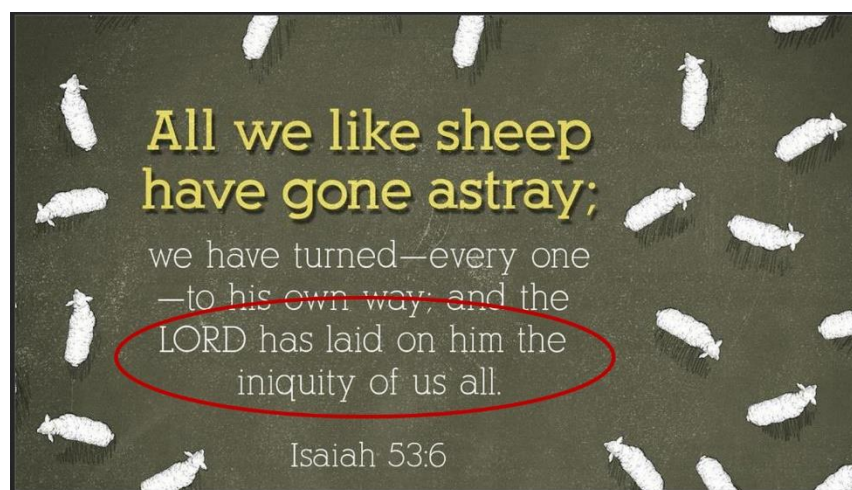
Hebrews 9:22

According to the Torah, almost everything is purified with blood; indeed, **without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins** (Messianic Jews 9:22).

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*Like someone from whom people turn their faces,
he was despised; we did not value him. In fact,
it was our diseases he bore, our pains from which he
suffered; yet we regarded him as punished, stricken
and afflicted by G_d. But he was wounded because of
our crimes, crushed because of our sins;
the disciplining that makes us whole fell on him,
and by his bruises we are healed (Yesha'yahu 53:3-5).*

Yesha'yahu prophesied quite clearly that Mashiach would himself provide our complete and final blood sacrifice, but because we don't like the idea, we manage to forget that we were told. According to Yesha'yahu, Mashiach's suffering was to bear the sorrows, grief, and iniquities of the nation of Isra'el as a guilt offering (53:4-6, 10, 12), and to justify many others as well (53:11). This sacrificial work of G_d's Servant provides the basis for the redemption and restoration of the Nation of Isra'el as well as for the redemption of the Gentiles. Mashiach's perfect atonement also makes possible the final establishment of the Messianic Kingdom.



ISSUES

Blood Atonement

(Vayikra 17:11; Yesha'yahu 53)

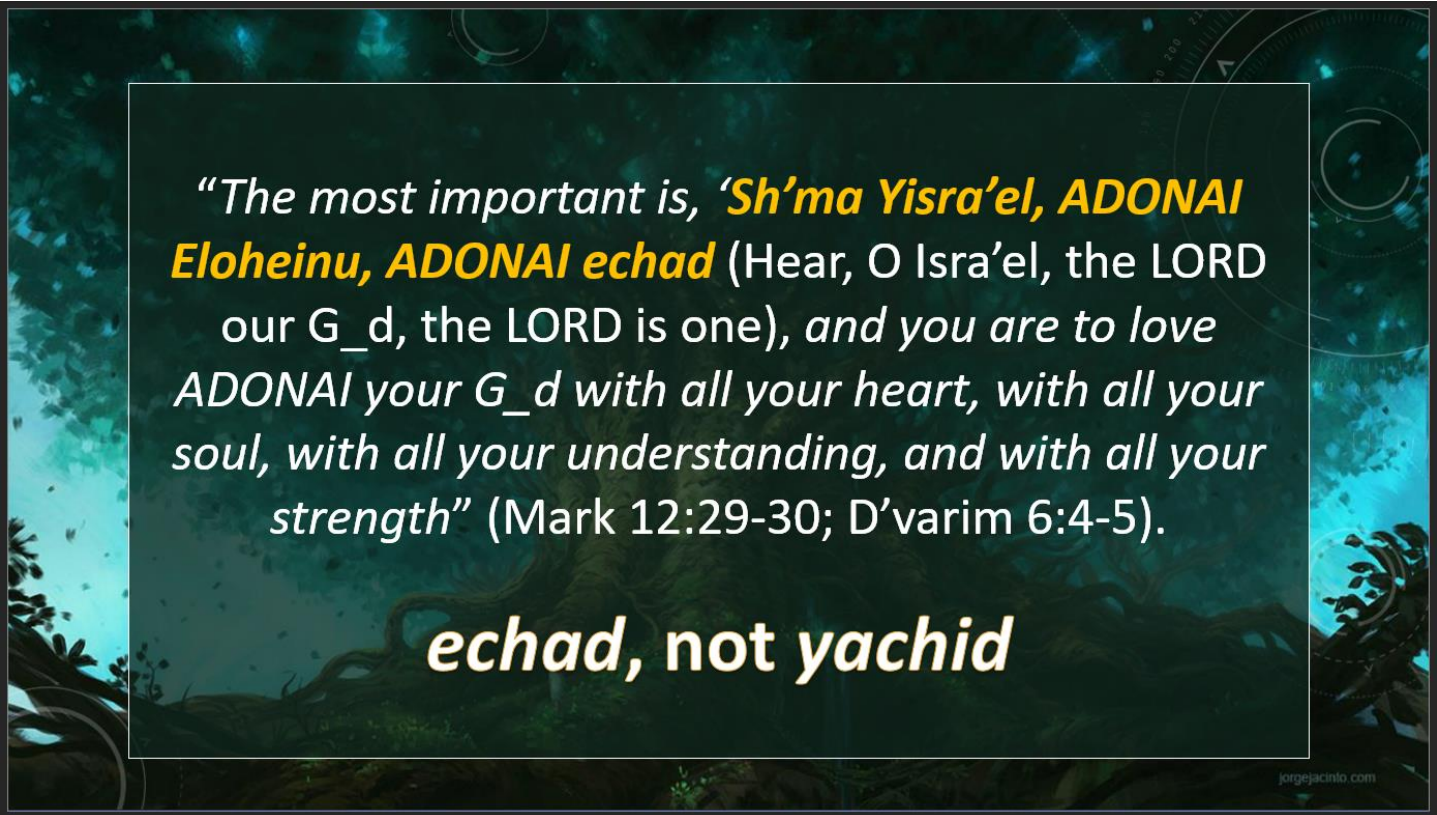
Composite Unity

(B'resheet 1, 3; Yesha'yahu 48:16;
Mishlei 30:4; Mark 12:29-30;
Yochanan 14:9, 15-18, 10:30)

The Messianic Age

(Yesha'yahu 2:2-4, 11:6-9;
Mattityahu 24:4-14, 30-31, 28:16-20)

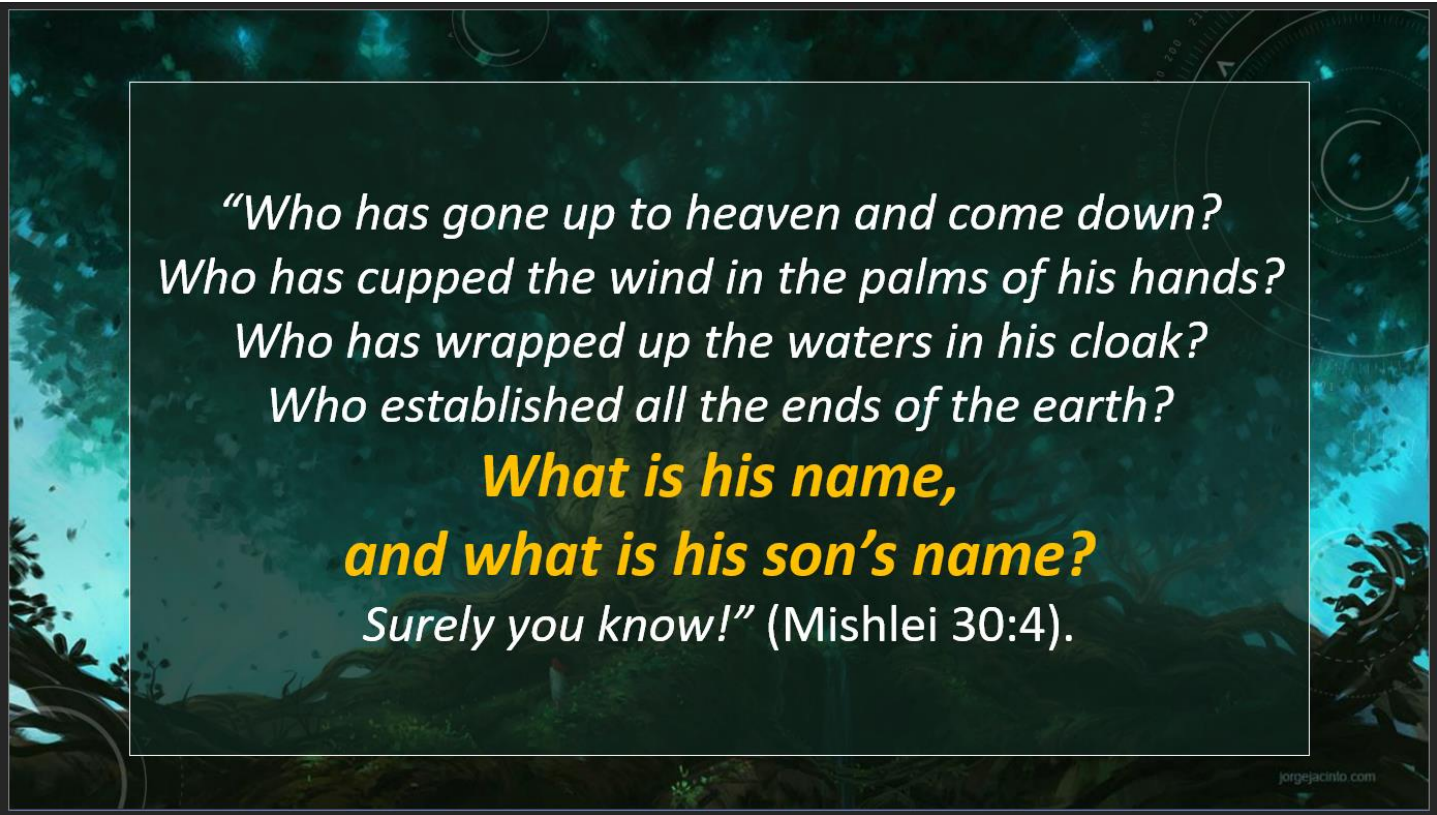
As noted above, the idea of the “composite unity” of G_d seems at first like a very strange concept for monotheistic faith (pp. 13-14). But remember that we met ADONAI in B'resheet 1:1, the *Ruach HaKodesh* in B'resheet 1:2, and the first hint of Mashiach in B'resheet 3:15. The most common name for ADONAI in the Bible is “Elohim,” which is a plural noun. But there's more



*“The most important is, **‘Sh’ma Yisra’el, ADONAI Eloheinu, ADONAI echad** (Hear, O Isra’el, the LORD our G_d, the LORD is one), and you are to love ADONAI your G_d with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your understanding, and with all your strength” (Mark 12:29-30; D’varim 6:4-5).*

echad, not yachid

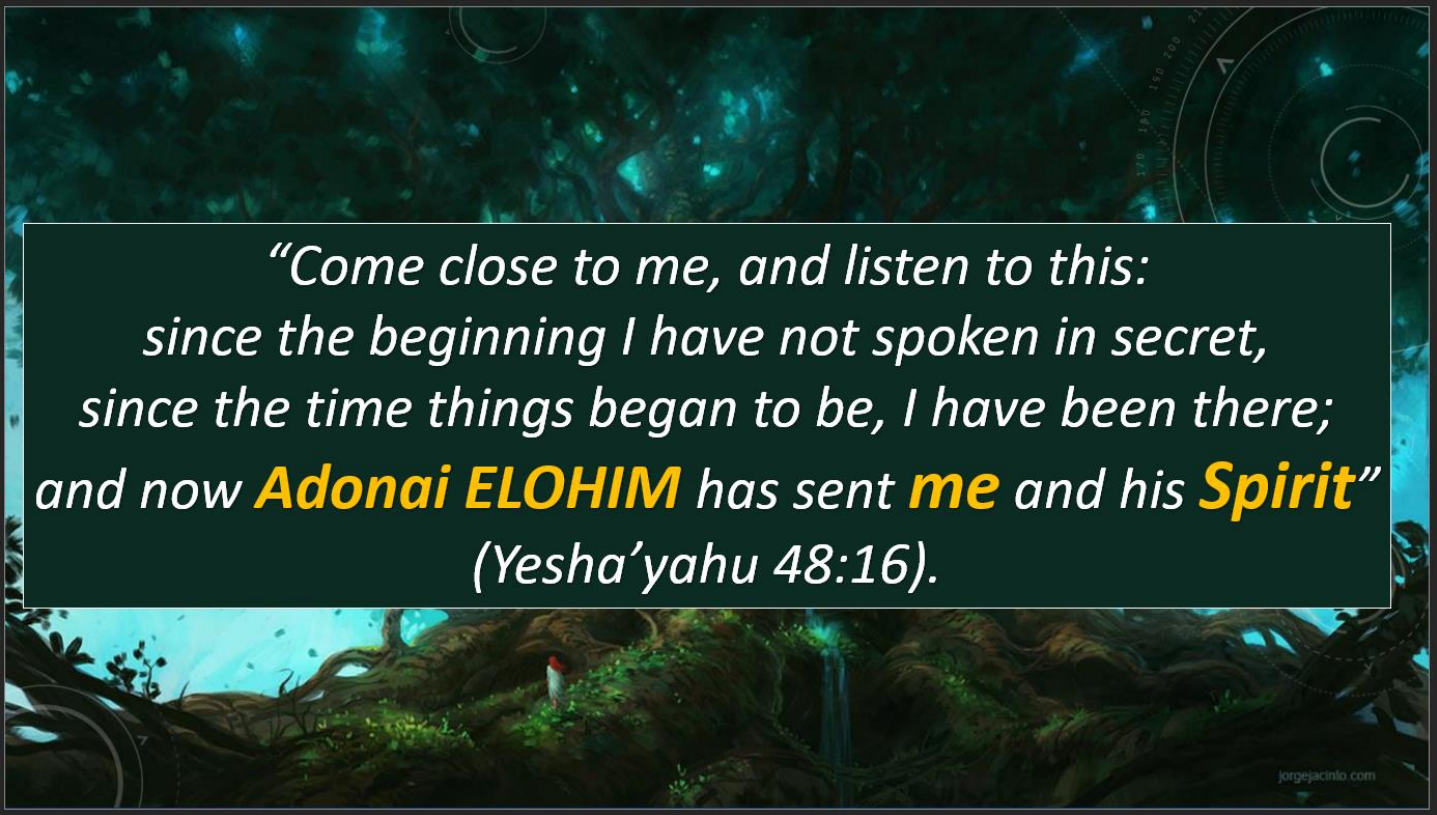
When Yeshua was asked “What is the greatest commandment,” he quoted the Sh’ma, as noted above. And when ADONAI inspired Moshe to pen the Sh’ma in D’varim 6:4-5 (Deuteronomy), ADONAI chose the word “echad” rather than “yachid” (p. 8). This is highly significant, since “yachid” is a word for a singular unity, like the number “1,” while “echad” is the word for a composite unity, like the oneness of a married couple (B’resheet 2:24). There are also hints of G_d’s “composite unity” sprinkled throughout the Bible, as the slides on the next page show.



*“Who has gone up to heaven and come down?
Who has cupped the wind in the palms of his hands?
Who has wrapped up the waters in his cloak?
Who established all the ends of the earth?*

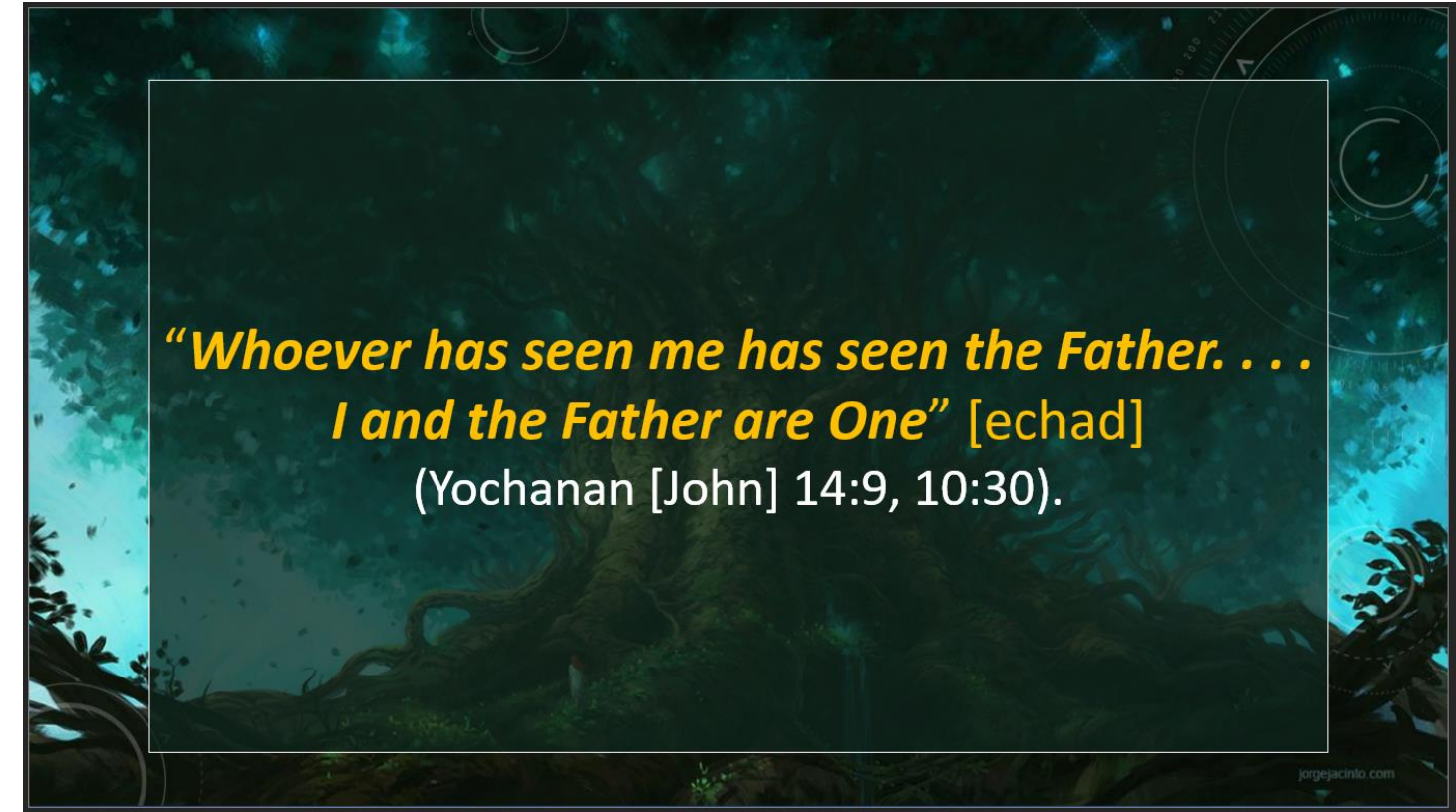
***What is his name,
and what is his son’s name?
Surely you know!”*** (Mishlei 30:4).

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*“Come close to me, and listen to this:
since the beginning I have not spoken in secret,
since the time things began to be, I have been there;
and now **Adonai ELOHIM** has sent **me** and his **Spirit**”*
(Yesha’yahu 48:16).

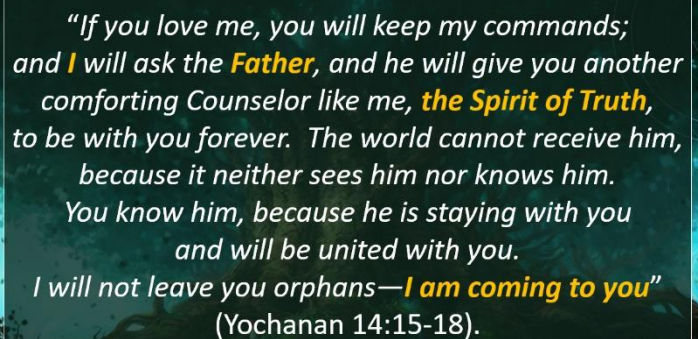
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***“Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. . . .
I and the Father are One” [echad]***
(Yochanan [John] 14:9, 10:30).

All of Yeshua’s *talmidim* were practicing Jews who had quoted the Sh’ma nearly every day of their lives, and Yeshua affirmed the Sh’ma as the Greatest Commandment, as we have seen. After they had been with him day and night for three years, Yeshua made the astonishing claim to his *talmidim* that he and ADONAI were/are **One** . . . and little by little, they came to believe this, as did Yeshua’s mother and at least two of his half-brothers, who had obviously known him all his life.

After he was killed on the execution stake and raised to life once more by ADONAI, Yeshua also identified himself with G_d’s *Ruach HaKodesh*, another astounding claim. Somehow, in the mystery of G_d’s Being, the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Spirit are One while also being distinct.



*“If you love me, you will keep my commands;
and I will ask the **Father**, and he will give you another
comforting Counselor like me, **the Spirit of Truth**,
to be with you forever. The world cannot receive him,
because it neither sees him nor knows him.
You know him, because he is staying with you
and will be united with you.
I will not leave you orphans—I am coming to you”*
(Yochanan 14:15-18).

ISSUES

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(Yesha'yahu 2:2-4, 11:6-9;
Mattityahu 24:4-14, 30-31, 28:16-20)

Another concern many have about identifying Yeshua as G_d's Mashiach is that the expected Messianic Age of Peace has quite obviously not arrived, at least not in the way that we expect (pp. 14-15).



Where is the peace?



In Mashiach's sacrifice, ADONAI has taken into G_d's own being all of the hell that has resulted from having made humans truly free.



A voice behind me asked, "Where is God? Where is He? Where can He be now?" and a voice within me answered: "Where? Here He is - He has been hanged here, on these gallows."

— Elie Wiesel —

The problem of evil has always been the greatest philosophical and theological problem for those who believe that ADONAI is both completely powerful and completely good. The effort to discover some resolution to this problem is called "theodicy."

While the Bible is very clear that G_d is not the author of evil—we humans make evil real in every generation—there is no escaping the reality that in creating human beings with genuine freedom, **G_d made evil possible**. It has been a great help to me to realize that while Yeshua's sacrifice on Moriyah was—and is—the sacrifice that makes atonement available to all who will accept it, both now and forever, such atonement is not the deepest meaning of that sacrifice.

The deepest meaning of Yeshua's sacrifice is that in that sacrifice, ADONAI took responsibility for and took into G_d's own Being all of the hell, all of the evil, all of the suffering that has resulted from having made humans genuinely free.



Yeshua's *talmidim* expected this Age of Shalom to come quickly, but Yeshua told them that, while the Age of Shalom began with his atonement and resurrection, what the Talmud calls "The Birth Pangs of the Mashiach" would continue until "*this Good News about the Kingdom has been announced throughout the whole world as a witness to all the nations.*

It is then that the end will come" (Mattityahu [Matthew] 24:14, p. 15).



This is the *shalom* Mashiach brings:

Creation

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with G_d, and the Word was G_d. He was with G_d in the beginning. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing made had being. In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind. . . .

Adoption

To as many as did receive him, to those who put their trust in his person and power, he gave the right to become children of G_d, not because of bloodline, physical impulse, or human intention, but because of G_d (Yochanan 1:1-4, 12-13).

Redemption

It is through [G_d's] Son that we have redemption – that is, our sins have been forgiven. He is the visible image of the invisible G_d. He is supreme over all creation, because in connection with him were created all things – in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, lordships, rulers or authorities – they have all been created through him and for him. He existed before all things, and he holds everything together. . . .

Atonement

*Also he is head of the Body, the Messianic Community
– he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead,
so that he might hold first place in everything.
For it pleased G_d to have his full being live in his Son
and **through his Son to reconcile to himself all things**,
whether on earth or in heaven, making peace
through him, through having his Son shed his blood
by being executed on a stake (Colossians 1:14-20).*

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Reconciliation

*You [Gentiles] were estranged from the national life
of Isra'el. You were foreigners to the covenants
embodying G_d's promise. You were in this world
without hope and without G_d. **But now, you who
were once far off have been brought near through
the shedding of the Messiah's blood. . . .***

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Shalom

*For he himself is our shalom – he has made us both one and **has broken down the m’chitzah** which divided us by destroying in his own body the enmity occasioned by the Torah, with its commands set forth in the form of ordinances. **He did this in order to create in union with himself from the two groups a single new humanity and thus make shalom** (Ephesians 2:12-15).*

It is a fair and a persistent question why, even now, G_d’s Age of Shalom has not come in its fullness (p. 16). Kefa (Peter), the most prominent of Yeshua’s Twelve Talmidim, offered this explanation, which grows completely out of ADONAI’s Love & Grace:

*During the Last Days, scoffers will come, following their own desires and asking, “Where is this promised ‘coming’ of his? For our fathers have died, and everything goes on just as it has since the beginning of creation.” Dear friends, do not ignore this: with the Lord, one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day. **The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some people think of slowness; on the contrary, he is patient with you; for it is not his purpose that anyone should be destroyed, but that everyone should turn from his sins** (2 Kefa [Peter] 3:3, 8-9).*

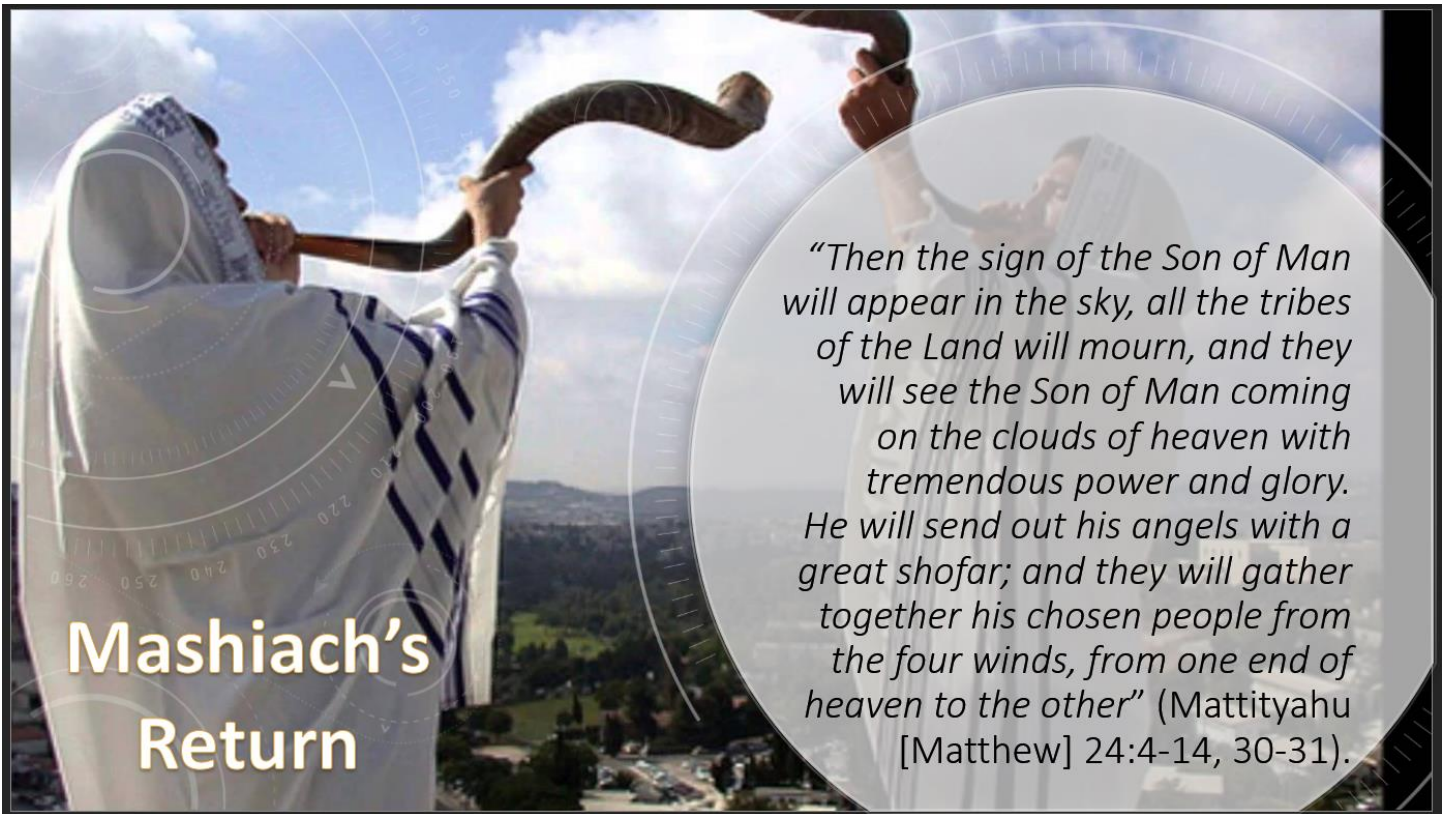


When Kefa wrote that *“It is not G_d’s purpose that anyone should be destroyed, but that everyone should turn from his sins,”* he was talking about Yeshua’s affirmation that *“unless a person is born again from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of G_d”* (Yochanan [John] 3:3; pp. 16-17).

ADONAI’s invitation to each of us, whether Jew or Gentile, is that we acknowledge our sinfulness, repent (turn) from it, and accept the atonement Yeshua made on our behalf. When we do these three things, we are *“born again from above,”* and we begin a new life filled with G_d’s *Ruach HaKodesh*.

After being “born again” (Yeshua’s term), we spend the rest of our days on earth joyfully serving ADONAI and inviting others to come to know Yeshua, who is alive and with us every moment, as he promised. But that is still not the end of the Story.

From Adam and Havah forward, ADONAI has been at work to birth a “chosen people” who will serve and glorify him, extending G_d’s reign to every corner of the earth. And in the end, the Messianic Age will come in its fullness as ADONAI creates a “new heaven” and a “new earth,” where righteousness reigns, as the prophets foretold.



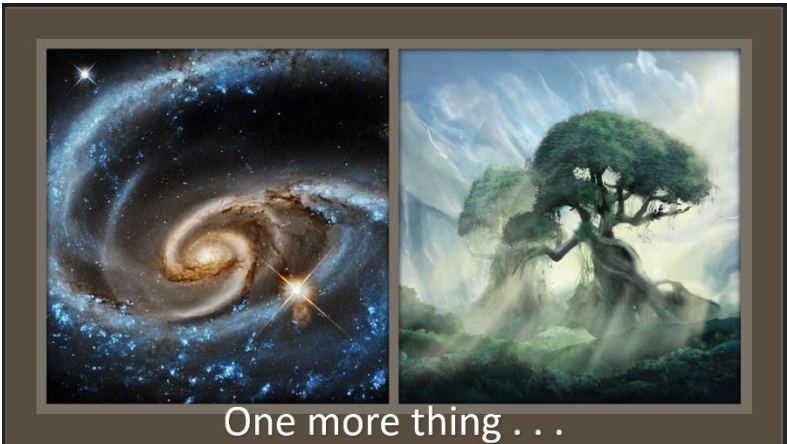
“Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, all the tribes of the Land will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with tremendous power and glory. He will send out his angels with a great shofar; and they will gather together his chosen people from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Mattityahu [Matthew] 24:4-14, 30-31).

Mashiach's Return

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had passed away, and the sea was no longer there. Also I saw the holy city, New Yerushalayim, coming down out of heaven from G_d, prepared like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

I heard a loud voice from the throne say, “See! G_d’s Sh’khinah (Shekinah; glory) is with mankind, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and he himself, G_d-with-them, will be their G_d. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will no longer be any death; and there will no longer be any mourning, crying or pain; because the old order has passed away (Revelation 21:1-4; p. 17).

But it gets better still





Two Trees once more

You'll remember that there were two special trees in the Garden of 'Eden (p. 17). One, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, was forbidden; the other, the Tree of Life was not forbidden, at least until Adam and Havah had sinned. At that time, they were mercifully separated from the Tree of Life so that they did not experience immortality while separated from ADONAI.

But now, in the New Creation, there are two trees once more. This time, though, there are two Trees of Life, one on both sides of the River of the Water of Life flowing from G_d's throne, so that it will never again be possible to be separated from its Life.

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**And so, my friend, after considering all these "lines of bearing,"  
to what or to whom do you think they point?**

**And how will you respond?**

