

Maximize Your Sabbath Through Deliberate Table Fellowship By Mikhal Daniel

While the Messianic movement has been around since the days of Messiah, over the past 20 years it has become the fastest growing movement within the Christian community. With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, scholars of the 20th century were forced to go back and reevaluate some of their underlying assumptions about hermeneutics (the process or method of interpreting the Bible). In addition, the X-Generation which followed the Baby Boomers was just waking up to the fact that modernism, the idea that science is the cure all, rationalism has the power to discover objective truth, and technology can solve any problem, had failed to live up to its “salvation” claims over mankind’s ills.

Thus, modernism had birthed the postmodern mindset, which ultimately reduced any concept of moral values as being totally relative and constructed purely by culture, not ordained by God.¹ Furthermore, naturalism, which reduces the mind to mere biochemical processes, eliminated any concept of truth, beauty, goodness, and meaning; making them appear as nothing more than social reflections constructed by human brains.²

With the onset of the 21st century, the newest generation following the X-Gens have become so immersed in the rampant pluralism (blending of all truth claims, cultures and religions) that even if they grew up in a Christian home or church, most all of them are failing to grasp a fundamental understanding of the biblical concept of absolute truth. The statistics reveal that the current generation is not only failing to come to faith in Messiah, but they are rejecting the entire concept of truth itself, particularly that truth which is revealed in the Scriptures and in particular in the Torah of Yaweh. Consequently, having been left with no sense of absolute right and wrong and therefore, no concept of sin, the gospel message itself has been completely watered down to the point of irrelevance. In such an environment, the traditional methods of “evangelism” are failing to reach future generations. So what is the solution? The answer is simple, yet profound. We must restore the art of “Table Fellowship” as the primary method of deliberate evangelistic outreach.

The Messianic Movement, which holds the most fundamental truth in its hands, the truth of the Torah and its continued validity in the world, something that is foundational to delivering the gospel message, has failed to make evangelism a primary focus with regard to its ultimate mission and existence. Often Torah communities end up getting bogged down in arguments or points of nuance regarding specific Scriptural points and the application of certain commands or what is most appropriately called “procedural *halachah*” (the manner in which a command is executed) rather than focusing more heavily, as the Messiah did, on “relational *halachah*” (how we treat others and what

¹ Douglas Groothuis, *Truth Decay: Defending Christianity Against The Challenges of Postmodernism*, (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 41.

² Ibid.

efforts we are taking to share the good news through *mitzvot* (good deeds) and deliberate efforts to share the gospel message with others).

It is this author's contention that Yaweh in His wisdom is pouring out and restoring His truth to His people for the fundamental purpose of rescuing His gospel message to the nations. It is not that our generation is so much more "wise" than any previous generation, in that we have today "discovered" the truth of God's eternal Torah and the continued validity of Torah in our lives; rather, God has opened our eyes to His eternal truth in order to rescue the gospel message from such a pluralistic and postmodern world. It is for this reason that Yaweh is now lifting the veil of ignorance with regard to His eternal Torah, and restoring Truth to Yaweh's people so that they may begin to walk in His Ways and keep His commands, and ultimately, prepare a way for His Son's return. In so doing, a believer's actions will come in line with their truth claims, and the message of the gospel can be delivered to a lost and dying world.

But what does all this have to do with the Sabbath? Everything.

The Sabbath is the fundamental hub under which the entire process of delivering the gospel message revolves. Not only does its observance establish our belief as followers of the Master and validate our claim of Yaweh as Creator of the Universe, the one who established the earth and all that is in it, and the one who makes the rules. But it also sets the foundation in us upon which God builds our faith, develops intimacy with us, allows us to teach, instruct and train our children in the ways of God, and most importantly, have and take time to stop seeking our own way and our own interests to be about God's business. In other words, the Sabbath is a time in which we should be deliberate about our efforts to share the good news with neighbors, family and friends. It is a time designated to stop seeking our own interests and seek God's. We have the freedom to stop working for our own survival on this holy day and be deliberate in our efforts to share the good news.

On a practical level, one idea in being deliberate in our efforts to be a light in the world on this day is to utilize the Erev Shabbat (Friday night) mealtime as a way of bringing those whom God has brought in our lives, either family, extended family, as well as friends and neighbors into our homes to simply be available to them during the Sabbath. We can feed them and invite them into our world in which God is recognized for Who He Is, and we do not have to make any *special efforts* to "bring up" the issue of salvation. It is a natural part of why we enter into God's rest on this day.

One suggestion is to begin to set aside at least one or two weeks per month in which you invite a lost relative, friend or neighbor to your home for an Erev Shabbat meal to engage in a little "table fellowship." This provides a nonthreatening way for you to be available to people God has brought into your life but who are not yet saved.

There is something very spiritually tangible and unique about using this time for specific evangelistic table fellowship that lends itself to biblical discussion and questions, rather than forcing the truth down someone's throat. The atmosphere created when we enter the

Sabbath in which we allow our hearts and minds to stop striving and rest, having prepared and cleaned our homes, set out a special dinner setting and meal, lit the candles, and quieted our hearts from the cares of the day can allow us to create an environment that brings a special anointing for deliberate witnessing about our Messiah.

While in the past people have sought to share the good news by inviting people to their “church,” congregation, community, or fellowship, in reality, it was through what I like to call simple “table fellowship” that the good news was initially spread so quickly to the nations following the time of Messiah. From house to house, from Sabbath to Sabbath, believers began to share the good news with friends and family. Sha’ul (Paul) who is noted as having worked to support himself during his ministry rather than be supported by others; made it a priority to take the good news to the cities he visited on the Sabbath. So while Paul likely worked during the week to provide for his own needs, we see him clearly demonstrate through his life actions that the Sabbath was a time he used specifically to share the good news. As women, we have at our disposal an important opportunity to make evangelism a deliberate ongoing event in our lives every Sabbath. But it will never happen if women do not take the initiative to make evangelistic table fellowship a part of their personal God given ministry. Through this simple act of inviting people to our homes for a meal, we have the ability to be used by God to affect dramatic change in people’s lives, one child, one friend, one neighbor at a time.