

March 1, 2021

International Apologetics Declaration

“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Ephesians 4:1-6; NKJV, here and following).

Preamble:

In recent decades, there has been a dangerous rise in a variety of false teachings that have been affecting and penetrating evangelical churches and Messianic communities, thus leading believers away from the biblical doctrine and undermining their relationship with God (1 John 2:22-23, 4:1-4). False teachings are masterminded by “seductive spirits” which preach “another Jesus” and “another gospel” (1 Timothy 4:1; Galatians 1:6-12; 2 Corinthians 11:1-4). The Word of God cautions us, “Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ” (Colossians 2:8). The biblical preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom is focused on the King, Jesus Christ (*Yeshua HaMashiach*), as Paul wrote, “but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:23-24). In His Word, the Lord calls us “to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3), as well as to correctly handle “the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). To stand against the prevalent situation, the Lord has prompted ministers from various communities to create the International Apologetics Declaration. The need for such a document is critical, but it does not seek to impugn the church or the Messianic movement (2 Corinthians 2:17, 13:8; Galatians 4:16). On the contrary, we believe and hope that the Declaration and the recommended theological and apologetics resources will help believers find answers to their concerns so that we can strive “together for the faith of the gospel” (Philippians 1:27).

The Objectives of this Declaration:

- (1) *Outline the fundamental tenets of biblical faith;*
- (2) *Emphasize the most common theological and practical misconceptions in contemporary evangelical and messianic circles;*
- (3) *Promote spiritual unity among believers based on the biblical doctrine.*

Objectives of the Declaration:

I. *Outline the fundamental tenets of biblical faith:*

1. **The Bible:** The 66 books of the Bible are the only inerrant and infallible Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Bible must be treated as the only basis for our doctrines. Some ancient and contemporary Jewish and Christian texts are undoubtedly valuable (esp. in a historical sense, like the Books of the Maccabees which belong to the ancient Jewish Apocrypha), but the books of the Old and New Testaments (*Tanakh* and *Brit Hadasha*) are the only God-inspired authority for believers. The Lord more than once warned His people not to take away from or add to His word

with severe consequences for violating His command (Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32; Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18-19).

2. **Unity of God:** The Lord God of Israel, Yahweh is One and is the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ - *Yeshua HaMashiach*) and the Holy Spirit (*Ruach HaKodesh*) (Deuteronomy 4:35, 6:4; Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Corinthians 13:14). The Son, who exists eternally, became incarnate as Jesus Christ (*Yeshua HaMashiach*), the second person of the One God (John 1:1-18; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1-3). Jesus Christ (*Yeshua HaMashiach*) and the Holy Spirit (*Ruach HaKodesh*) are co-equal in their eternal divine substance with God the Father (Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Corinthians 13:14).
3. **Jesus Christ (*Yeshua HaMashiach*):** The person of Jesus Christ (*Yeshua HaMashiach*) has two essences – divine and human (John 1:1-18, 10:30; Colossians 2:8-9; Hebrews 4:14-15). The Lord Jesus Christ (*Adon Yeshua HaMashiach*) is the true God and eternal life (1 John 5:20; Hebrews 13:8). Jesus Christ (*Yeshua HaMashiach*) is the only mediator between God the Father and the human race (1 Timothy 2:5-6). The Bible says, “that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:10-11). Jesus Christ (*Yeshua HaMashiach*) lived a perfect life, died for our sins on the cross of Calvary, rose from the dead (on the third day, as told in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4), was received up into heaven and will return a second time from heaven visibly in His glorified body (Matthew 24:29-30; Zechariah 12:10, 14:3-4; Acts 1:6-11; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; Revelation 1:7).
4. **Salvation:** Conversion (being born-again) is an essential element of salvation, which includes repentance (*t’shuva*) and faith that radically change a person’s attitude towards God and turn them from a sinful way of life (2 Chronicles 7:14; John 3:1-8; Acts 3:19; 2 Corinthians 5:17). We, both Jews and non-Jews, are justified and saved only through faith in the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (*Yeshua HaMashiach*) (Romans 10:9-13; Ephesians 2:14-15); therefore, the Gospel (*besorah*) must be preached to all the nations without exception (Matthew 10:5-6, 15:24, 28:19-20; Romans 1:16). God produces a desire in the believer’s heart to do good works (James 2:14-26; Philippians 2:13; Galatians 6:9-10).
5. **Israel and the Church:** God is still actively working with both historical Israel and the Church (believers in Jesus [*Yeshua*], both Jews and non-Jews). The Jewish people are still God’s chosen and loved by God. At the end of the age, all Israel that will see the crucified Jesus Christ (*Yeshua HaMashiach*), will repent, and recognize Him as their Messiah (*Mashiach*). They will be saved and accepted by God into New Covenantal relationship (Jeremiah 31:1; Zechariah 12:10, 13:1; Romans 11:11, 12, 26-29). Jewish believers in Jesus Christ (*Yeshua HaMashiach*) (known today as Messianic Jews, *Yehudim Meshichim*) belong to the universal Church, as well as to the Jewish people. The Bible calls them the remnant of Israel (Romans 11:1-5). Believers in Jesus Christ (*Yeshua HaMashiach*) from the nations belong to the universal Church; they are the spiritual seed of Abraham and heirs according to the promises of God (Galatians 3:26-29). All believers should strive to refute and denounce anti-Semitism (hostility towards and demonization of the Jewish people), racism, and racial discrimination, as well as pray for the salvation of Israel and peace in Jerusalem (Romans 10:1; Psalm 122:6), actively promoting spiritual unity among believers based on the biblical doctrine (Genesis 12:1-3; Zechariah 8:20-23; Esther 4:13-14; John 4:22; Romans 9:1-5, 11:17-22).

“Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: “For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name.” And again, he says: “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!” And again: “Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!” And again, Isaiah says: “There shall be a root of Jesse;

and He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in Him the Gentiles shall hope” (Romans 15:8-12).

II. *Emphasize the most common theological and practical misconceptions in contemporary evangelical and messianic circles:*

1. Denial of inerrancy and inspiration of the Old and New Testament books (*Tanakh* and *Brit Hadasha*)
2. Marcionism (rejection of inspiration and belittling the importance of the books of the Old Testament [*Tanakh*], as well as a false dualistic doctrine claiming existence of two gods, an evil and vengeful god of the Old Testament, and a kind and permissive god of the New Testament)
3. Recognition of various non-canonical texts as God-inspired (Jewish and early Christian apocrypha, Talmud, Midrashim, patristic writings, etc.)
4. Denial of the One God as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
5. Denial that Jesus Christ (*Yeshua HaMashiach*) is the Lord God
6. Denial of the human essence of Jesus Christ (*Yeshua HaMashiach*)
7. Denial that the Holy Spirit (*Ruach HaKodesh*) is the Lord God
8. Denial of the atoning death of Jesus Christ (*Yeshua HaMashiach*) on the cross of Calvary, of His resurrection from the dead in the glorious body, of ascension to heaven, of visible advent from heaven in the future, and of the establishment of His millennial kingdom on the earth with the capital of Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:1-5; Jeremiah 23:5-8, 33:14-26; Micah 4:1-8; Zechariah 8:1-8, chapters 12-14; Revelation 20:1-10)
9. Denial of life after death, of the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (*Yeshua HaMashiach*) from the dead and of future resurrection of all people from the dead (the resurrection “of life”, and the resurrection “of condemnation” [John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20:11-15])
10. Denial of the existence of Satan and demons (evil spirits)
11. Various forms of pseudo-spirituality, occultism and paganism in Judaism and Christianity, such as Kabbalah, prayers to the saints, astrology, Scientology, the teaching of the New Age, Reiki (a form of alternative medicine), etc.
12. Denial of salvation only by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ (*Yeshua HaMashiach*)
13. Antinomianism (a teaching according to which God does not require believers follow the moral laws established by Him in the Bible)
14. Christian universalism (a teaching according to which all people will be saved eventually)
15. Dual-covenant theology (a teaching according to which “Yeshua is not for Jews” and they have their own way of salvation without personal faith in Jesus Christ [*Yeshua HaMashiach*])
16. Supersessionism or replacement theology (a doctrine according to which the Church has replaced Israel and Jews have lost their status as God’s chosen nation; this doctrine denies literal fulfillment of the prophecies concerning Israel during the millennial kingdom of Christ [*Mashiach*] on earth)
17. Anti-Semitism in Christian circles (hostile attitude towards and demonization of the Jewish people)
18. Denial of the Jewish roots of the Christian faith
19. Denial of the biblical prophecies according to which the Lord Himself will assemble the Jewish people in the land of Israel in the future (Isaiah 14:1-2, 43:5-7, 49:22; Jeremiah 16:14-16; Ezekiel 37:1-14, 38:8; Zechariah 12:9-14)
20. Non-recognition of the right of Messianic Jews to associate themselves with their people, live a recognizable Jewish life, celebrate the feasts of the Lord in accordance with the biblical calendar, and reveal their messianic fulfillment in the life of Jesus Christ (*Yeshua HaMashiach*) and in future events predicted by the prophets (Zechariah 14:16-19)

“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction” (2 Peter 2:1).

III. *Promote spiritual unity among believers based on biblical doctrine by:*

1. Studying and teaching the Scriptures with respect to the Hebrew and Greek languages and the culture of the biblical times
2. Cultivating respect for Jewish and Christian traditions unless they are pagan and contradict the biblical doctrine (Matthew 15:6; Acts 15:20-21, 29; 1 Corinthians 10:20-22, 31-33, 12:1-2; Colossians 2:16-17; 1 Thess. 1:9, 5:20-21; Revelation 2:14-15)
3. Promoting dialogue between Messianic Jews and evangelical believers without displaying mutual insolence (Luke 18:14; Romans 11:17-22; Ephesians 2:11-22)
4. Promoting spiritual assistance to those affected by movements like Jews for Judaism (a counter-messianic organization), Bnei Noah (Sons of Noah), and such pseudo-Christian cults as Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons (Proverbs 24:11-12; Ephesians 4:14-16; 1 John 4:1-4)
5. Holding joint spiritual events, prayers for Israel and the Church, and also helping persecuted believers in Israel and other countries (Psalm 122:6; Isaiah 62:1-7; Romans 9:1-3, 10:1, 15:27; 1 Timothy 2:1, 4:16)
6. Developing effective methods to reach non-believers with the Gospel both in Israel and in the whole world (Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 1:16; 10:1)

“Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God” (Romans 15:5-7).