

Christ in Prophecy
“Messianic 1: The Messianic Jewish Movement”

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: Is it really possible for a Jew to believe in Jesus as his Messiah and still remain a Jew? That’s what Messianic Jews say. What is Messianic Judaism and how does it relate to the end times? For a fascinating interview with one of the foremost Messianic Jewish leaders in the world today stay tuned.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Well greetings in the name of Jesus our blessed hope and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. I am delighted to have with me this week one of the foremost Messianic Jewish leaders in the world today. His name is Joel Chernoff. He is a gifted musician and a visionary leader. He serves as General Secretary of the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America, and President of the International Messianic Jewish Alliance. Joel, welcome to Christ in Prophecy.

Joel Chernoff: Thank you very much.

Dr. Reagan: And welcome to Texas!

Joel Chernoff: Shalom to you. I was impressed with that introduction, that was good.

Dr. Reagan: Well, I just want to jump right into this topic immediately. We’ll get to your background a little later. I want to ask you a question. And that is, what in the world is Messianic Judaism?

Joel Chernoff: Well, Messianic Judaism is basically First Century faith, New Testament faith, in its Jewish expression and culture. In the first century all of the apostles and disciples understood that, lived it. It was very, very normal. There was a disconnect over the next 18 centuries and then in an incredible fashion the Lord brought back Messianic Jews again into the body and then also is restoring the faith into its Jewish context. Messianic Judaism is the fastest growing stream of Jewish faith on this planet.

Dr. Reagan: Wow.

Joel Chernoff: Today, hands down.

Dr. Reagan: So a Messianic Jew is a Jewish person who has accepted Yeshua as his Messiah.

Joel Chernoff: That is correct.

Dr. Reagan: Now, isn't it true that before Messianic Judaism hit the scene there was something called Hebrew Christian or Hebraic Christians.

Joel Chernoff: Hebrew Christianity.

Dr. Reagan: Yes. And that was where you tried to convert a Jew to Christianity but really made him a Gentile Christian, right?

Joel Chernoff: Well, most of the Jewish believers in the faith, and there were just a few of us over the centuries. They were pretty much forced to give up anything Jewish and their culture and so forth and they were in the Church and they were in a very non-Jewish setting. Around the 1880's Jewish people in the Church began to feel that they wanted to express Jewishness again. And so they began to outside of the normative Church have conferences and so forth and they were called Hebrew Christians. Now they were not fully back to the First Century Messianic Jewish synagogues and so forth, but that was the first step. It was considered radical and they took a lot of flack for it.

Dr. Reagan: And wasn't your father involved in that?

Joel Chernoff: Well, my father was involved more in the 50's and the 60's. And he was a Hebrew Christian leader.

Dr. Reagan: What was his name?

Joel Chernoff: Martin Chernoff. And Mom and Dad were really pioneers in the Messianic...

Dr. Reagan: Yes, in fact they were the ones who really established the first Messianic congregation.

Joel Chernoff: Independent one, where the people paid the pastor's, the rabbi's salary, yes. They were the first but there were actually many, many people soon after that also.

Dr. Reagan: Well let me read you some statistics here. I read an article some time ago that said in 1967 when the Six Day War occurred there was not a single Messianic congregation on planet earth according to this article. And it said that as of today, and this was several years ago, there were more than 400 such congregations in the United States and over 40 in Israel. Now can you bring those statistics up to date?

Joel Chernoff: Oh wow absolutely. I mean that is very, very true. My father used to say he and his friends used to say they actually knew every Jewish believer on the planet. That's how small the remnant was. I mean it was big news if anybody believed. After '67 that changed. There were no synagogues at all prior and then after that it just began to grow as God restored Messianic Judaism over 500 synagogues on the planet, minimum. We aren't even sure, it could be way beyond.

Dr. Reagan: And would it be accurate to say there are at least 40 in Israel.

Joel Chernoff: There are probably 80 or 90.

Dr. Reagan: Okay so that's bringing those statistics up to date. Now how do you explain this sudden explosion of Messianic Judaism after the Six Day War in that period of time? Was there a change in the way that people began to approach Jews to try to bring them to Yeshua? Why so many Jews suddenly coming to Yeshua?

Joel Chernoff: Well, you know, there is something called Christ in Prophecy. Prophecy, which is this show, this is what this show's all about. The latter days, the Scripture says the prophets say, a couple of major things would tell us we have passed into the period called the End of Days. The restoration of physical Israel which took place in 1948, and then God prophesied through many of His prophets. He would pour out His Spirit once again upon the dry bones of Israel, my people's bones, and that started to happen in 1967. Dave, nobody can take any credit for it, there wasn't any grand plan by any ministry or any great speaker that simply lit the fire, no. It was simply time in God's plan, the latter days, before He comes back to begin to pour out His Spirit. Because doesn't the scripture say that the Messiah isn't coming back until the Jewish people say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of God, the Lord."

Dr. Reagan: Absolutely. Jesus Himself said that. I will not come back until they say, "Baruch ha ba B'shem Adonai, blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord."

Joel Chernoff: That's exactly right. So that must happen first. And that began in '67. God just out of nowhere in the Jesus people, brought revival of that time, very quietly. That was the most important outpouring of the Spirit since the first.

Dr. Reagan: Absolutely.

Joel Chernoff: Why, because it included our people.

Dr. Reagan: Well, Joel, you remind me of the prophecy in Joel 2 verse 28, the book named after you. That's right. It says, "and it will come about after this that I will pour out my spirit on all mankind, your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions, even on the male and female servants and I will pour out my spirit in those days." But the key is that it will come about after this, well, after what? You back up and the rest of the thing is talking about the return of the Jews to the land and the reestablishment of their state and it says after that I'm going to pour out my Spirit.

Joel Chernoff: That's right.

Dr. Reagan: And 1948, the state was reestablished. And you know, it's amazing to me that one year later in May of 1949, a young man that nobody had ever heard of was holding a tent revival in Los Angeles. And that revival grew every day, greater and greater and greater. Until finally Randolph Hearst who drove by every day in his limousine couldn't stand it any longer, he said, "I gotta find out what this, he's a newspaper man!" So he goes in, sits on the back row and the next day he sends a telegram to the Hearst media which was the media of the United States and it said Puff Graham. That's all it said. The next day thousands of reporters descended on that tent and the ministry of Billy Graham took off like a rocket, touching more people around the world than any ministry since that time, and here it is. After the Jews are established in the land.

Joel Chernoff: And there has been many, many outpourings of the Spirit since then. But see this is good news, really, because you know, if this is true, and it is of course. God is pouring out His Spirit upon us, the dry bones of Israel. God is breathing on us again. This is good news for all of the families of this earth. Because God says in the book of Joel, "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh." Paul actually says that if by the cutting off of some of these natural branches all of this has happened, what will be the story when the natural branches are grafted back into their own tree. What does he say? "Life from the dead." Hey, that's good news. All of the nations can say, "Hallelujah" for that.

Dr. Reagan: So you're in effect saying that this great outpouring of the Holy Spirit and this, as evidenced in many ways, one way being a large number of Jewish people coming to Yeshua, is evidence that we're living in the end times. It's an evidence of the soon return of the Messiah.

Joel Chernoff: Clear sign, that's a clear sign. The restoration of Israel spiritually was to only happen in the final days, the last days. This is an end game play here.

Dr. Reagan: I want you to know you're my kind of man. I like to hear you say... Now, wasn't there sort of a fundamental shift in the way in which people approached Jews in the late '60s? Prior to that time in effect saying to a person you almost have to give up your Jewish heritage to become a Christian. You have to become a Gentile Christian. And suddenly saying, no you've become a fulfilled Jew. You don't have to give up your heritage. If you want to follow the kosher laws you can do that. If you want to observe the feasts you can do that. If you want to observe the Sabbath you can do that, right? And you don't have to give up your Jewish. After all the apostles didn't give up their Jewish heritage. Paul always went to the synagogue to observe these things and continued to be a believer in Yeshua.

Joel Chernoff: Yeah, that was the exciting thing about this new move of the Spirit upon our people. There was a whole lot of supernatural harvesting happening there in the late 60's and 70's. But out of that large number of our Jewish people saved, there was a narrow slice Dave. Of people that God put a vision in and said it's time to put the Jewish clothes back upon Jesus, and that was where Messianic Judaism was born. Got to tell you an interesting story. My father did not have a church of a thousand people, or a synagogue of a thousand people, but he was a man of God. And he was prophetic and let's face it, this whole show is prophetic, it's all about the supernatural plan of God. In the mid 60's, prior to the out pouring of the Spirit, he would call us kids in, once in awhile he would get a vision, a Joel 2 type of vision. And he called us in as young kids and he said, "Listen I've got to tell you this." And he began to share with us a vision, of course you know, we're 13, 14, 15, we don't care. We didn't care really. Dad, whatever, you know, whatever. But we sat there and we heard him. He said, "Joel and David, I saw a banner across the sky and it said Messianic Judaism." We had never heard the term before.

Dr. Reagan: Wow.

Joel Chernoff: And then under that banner towards a bright light were flowing tens of thousands of Jewish people. Many of them young, many of them young people. And he said, "Joel and David." You know we couldn't care at that point but we were still hearing it. Parents, tell your kids, share with them. And I'll tell you something, within three years, the Spirit of God was poured out and my parents were ready. Most of his colleagues

rejected their revival because it didn't look like their normal thing. It was a bunch of hippie kids who were saved on fire for God. It didn't look the way that they thought it should so they missed it. But not my parents. My parents had that vision, were right on top of it, and soon formed the very first independent synagogue, Messianic synagogue.

Dr. Reagan: Wow. I tell you that is exciting and I'm gonna tell in a few minutes about how I actually visited that synagogue later on after they had left in the early 80's. But I want to take a pause right here for a moment. I'm sure many of our viewers are saying Joel Chernoff, Joel Chernoff, I've heard that name, I know that name from someplace. Well, you were the founder of a very famous singing group called Lamb and we're gonna talk about that more later. But we want to pause right here for a moment and I want you to bless all of us.

Joel Chernoff: You want me to sing?

Dr. Reagan: I want you to sing my favorite Lamb song which is, *Year of Jubilee*. Hallelujah! Here is Joel Chernoff singing *Year of Jubilee*.

[Song]

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: Well, welcome back to Christ in Prophecy and my special guest Joel Chernoff. Joel, thanks for that song. Man, I tell you, you can't believe how exciting it was for me to hear you sing that because that was always my favorite Messianic Jewish song. I wore out the tape, I wore out the CD, and then finally I get to see you sing it in person. I'm hoping people will order your album, in fact, why don't you just look right into that camera and tell people...

Joel Chernoff: Which camera is it?

Dr. Reagan: Tell them how they can order your videos.

Joel Chernoff: www.lambMessianicmusic.com, www.lambMessianicmusic.com.

Dr. Reagan: What about an 800 number? Do you have an 800 number?

Joel Chernoff: 800-225-6522, 800-225-6522. Thank you Dave.

Dr. Reagan: Now I want to ask you another question and that is, how did you come to know Yeshua as your Messiah?

Joel Chernoff: Well, my parents, both of them, I mean, this is a boring testimony if you're thinking those terms. But it's the correct way, it really is the way it should be. Parents were both wonderful believers, lived a godly life.

Dr. Reagan: Your Dad was from Canada right?

Joel Chernoff: Dad was from Canada, Mom was from Tennessee.

Dr. Reagan: How does a Canadian Jew meet a Tennessee Jew?

Joel Chernoff: He was actually at a Bible School. And then he was doing some touring in the south and speaking and speaking about Jewish ministry.

Dr. Reagan: Did he grow up in a Messianic family?

Joel Chernoff: No, no. That was an orthodox family out of Eastern Europe.

Dr. Reagan: How did he come to know the Lord?

Joel Chernoff: He came through a mission in Toronto Canada. It's a Jewish believing family, was ministering there to all the kids in the area. And my father was a basketball player and he had all of his boys and they used to get together and play basketball there at this particular place. But, they were forced to sit and hear the teaching and prophecies first. And he sat there and he listened Dave and listened and just fought it and fought it. And finally one day the Lord got through to him and he said, you know what? Yeshua's the Messiah. Couldn't say the name Jesus for a year, though. It took him a year. Yeshua was fine.

Dr. Reagan: Did his family disown him?

Joel Chernoff: No they didn't, because his family eventually accepted the Lord.

Dr. Reagan: Is that right?

Joel Chernoff: Yeah.

Dr. Reagan: Praise God!

Joel Chernoff: They were kind of orthodox moving toward secular and the new world, and they had clothing stores and stuff like that up there.

Dr. Reagan: So you actually just grew up in a believing family. Boy, that's the way it should be.

Joel Chernoff: Yeah, and I saw my father healed of an incurable disease. Of course as a kid, you know, he was practically dead and then a believer came over. He had, his lungs were filled with phlegm and emphysema. And he was dying and a believer came over and that night he began to spit up all of this phlegm and by the morning he was completely healed. Ran down, he got a check and so I saw all of that and at one point my parents would share with us about sin. And suddenly I was just convicted that I did not have a covering for sin. And I said, "Dad, I think it's time, I need to pray."

Dr. Reagan: How old were you then?

Joel Chernoff: I was probably about 12. And so he took me in and I said, "Listen I want to pray and I want to know that I'm saved. I want to know that I'm redeemed." And so he prayed with me and that was good, but I was not on fire until college.

Dr. Reagan: College, that's when people usually lose their faith.

Joel Chernoff: I know that was during the Jesus people revival, the Messianic revival. Man, I caught on fire, I'm telling you. We had an Acts chapter 2 prayer time in our little Hebrew Christian fellowship at that time.

Dr. Reagan: Was this in Cincinnati?

Joel Chernoff: This was in Cincinnati. We were all in the University of Cincinnati and there was a lot of spiritual activity and people were coming on the campus and preaching and all the Jewish kids were getting stirred up and we were getting stirred up. And we just decided, all of us kids, Hebrew Christian kids, a lot of Jewish kids there, and then some of our Christian friends and said, let's get together to pray. We hadn't prayed in years Dave. And we didn't even know what to do, and we all gathered and God's Spirit fell upon us. Our parents weren't even there, we just gathered and boom the Spirit of God fell on us. We were in there for 6 hours jumping up and down. We were never the same after that. Jumping up and down for 6 hours and repenting of sin and praying over everybody and casting demons out of everything alive and dead. Boom.

Dr. Reagan: Well, brother I can believe that you were jumping up and down because I have often said I have never seen anybody on planet earth more excited about the Lord than a Messianic Jew, a Jew who has found his Messiah. The very first Messianic congregation I ever went to in my life was in 1983 when I was preaching in Lexington, Kentucky and a friend called. I got there a day early and he called and he said, "David, have you ever been to a Messianic congregation?" I didn't even know what one was. And I said, "No." He said, "I'll take you tonight." And that Friday night I believe it was when we drove to Cincinnati, to the congregation your father had founded. He had gone by then. And I came in there and it was packed out. And here was a fellow with a prayer shawl, a Yakima. He preached on Yeshua in Isaiah 53 and then when he finished he called the elders up and they had people come up and they had prayer. And then he said okay, the Lord's blessed us in the Word, the Lord's blessed us in prayer, now let's bless the Lord. And I heard a loud bang and I looked around and all these chairs were being pushed up against the wall. And this rhythmic Jewish music started and somebody grabbed this hand and the next thing I knew I was in a circle and I didn't know what to do. And people were dancing and the lady next to me weighed about 300 pounds and I was concerned she was going to step on my foot. And I kept my feet moving even though I didn't know, and I tell you we worshipped for a solid hour. I was so exhausted, and then later on when I moved to Dallas I went to Baruch Hashem, where Marty Wallman is the Rabbi. And I tell you the truth, the first time I went there, they asked me to speak and I went there with my wife. They danced in the aisles for almost an hour and a half. I got up and I said, I have now observed worship aerobics. I'm telling you, Jews who find their Yeshua, their Messiah, they get excited.

Joel Chernoff: That's exactly right. First of all, I've gotta shake your hand. Mazel tov for that dance. Not everybody feels that comfortable. I gotta give you some props on that. That was good.

Dr. Reagan: Well, it's so exciting to see every time I meet a Jewish believer I get so excited. And they're always so excited, you know, about finding their Messiah.

Joel Chernoff: Yes, and of course, that is taking place all over the world now.

Dr. Reagan: Do you have any idea how many Jewish believers there may be in the United States right now?

Joel Chernoff: I've got to tell you something, I saw a study, this was the most extensive study ever done in this country. 1990, this is what is it now? 17 years ago. Thick study, breaking down the Jewish community. They put the figure in their study of Jewish people believing in Jesus. They called them Hebrew Christians, Christians, Messianic Jews, etc. 1.4 million just in this country that was in 1990! I was shocked. I called them up, I said "Listen, am I understanding this right?" They said, "Absolutely you can take it to the bank." I was shocked. Now that was 17 years ago. I don't think the Spirit of God has stopped moving since then, so we probably figure it's a couple of million at least, worldwide Messianic Jews.

Dr. Reagan: Praise the Lord. Folks we're gonna pause for just a moment and have a message about this wonderful book by Richard Booker called, *Blow the Trumpet in Zion*. I think it's the best book that's ever been written on the Jews in prophecy.

[Advertisement]

Part 3

Dr. Reagan: Well Joel, let me tell you something as we bring this program to a close. I have two quick questions and I don't know if we're going to be able to get both of them in. And one of them is: Jews say that it's impossible to be a believer in Yeshua and continue to be a Jew. And in fact the Israeli Supreme Court has even made a ruling along that line. What is your response to that?

Joel Chernoff: Well, I mean it isn't Biblically accurate. In the Tanakh, the Old Testament, there were two kinds of Jews, always, those that were following God and those that follow other gods. But they were never questioned in terms of them being Jewish and part of the nation of Israel. It was just that they were either following God or they were not following God. Today, you can be Jewish and believe in Buddha. You can be Jewish and believe Krishna and believe in nothing. So, I mean, it's crazy. Biblically speaking if you're born a Jew you will die a Jew. Now, of course, we believe that our faith is Biblically Jewish and Biblically what is preached in the scriptures. How can that be if the Messiah is Jesus, Yeshua, this is the most Jewish thing we could possibly do? Right?

Dr. Reagan: Yes. I agree.

Joel Chernoff: Okay? So we're agreed on that.

Dr. Reagan: Okay now what do you say to those who are critical of Messianic Judaism? Because they say, well, they're just Judaizers, they're trying to take people and put them under the law and do this sort of thing.

Joel Chernoff: Well you know, that's so common to hear that, especially in the past but actually judaizing has to do with telling somebody that they've got to take on the Jewish culture in order to be saved. In order to be saved that's right. Redeemed. If you take it beyond that that's not Biblical. Jewish people can be Jews. My goodness can we talk.

Dr. Reagan: Well actually Romans 14 makes it very clear that we have the freedom in Christ to observe the kosher laws or not to observe them to observe the feasts or not to observe them, to.....you know...

Joel Chernoff: and all the early believers worshipped as Jews and so forth and so on. They preached a Jewish gospel, for God's sake, to the whole world. I mean come on, what is wrong with that question. I mean come on.

Dr. Reagan: Well Joel, you have just been a great blessing to us and I want to ask you will you come back next week and talk with us some more about this?

Joel Chernoff: I'd be blessed to come back.

Dr. Reagan: Okay, well praise the lord.

Joel Chernoff: Hallelujah. Praise the Lord.

Dr. Reagan: Well folks we're gonna take him up on that offer and so next week Joel will be back with us, Lord willing. Until then this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb and Lion Ministries saying, "Look up! Be watchful! For our redemption is drawing near."

End