

‘Torah Portion’ Study

Local rabbi examines language, culture, traditions

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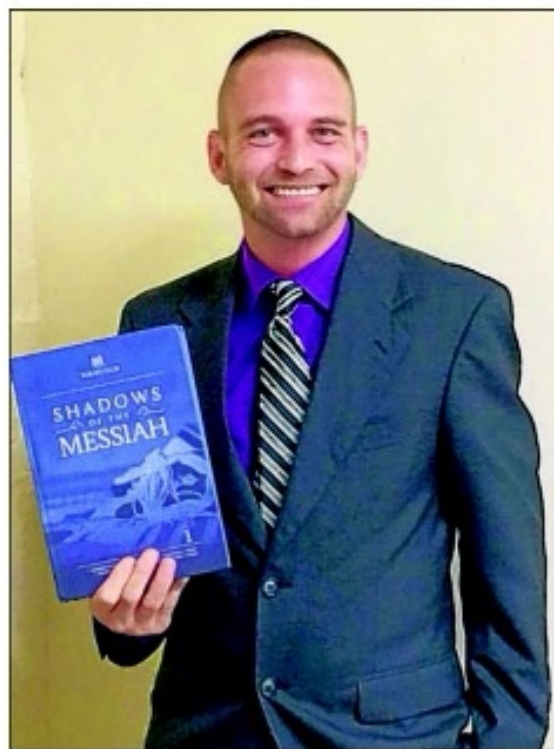
A local rabbi invites the community to delve into ancient Hebrew texts and Israelite culture to study the Jewish roots of the Christian faith in a weekly Bible study.

In addition to being a rabbi, Christopher Fredrickson is a published author, missionary consultant and former radio show host. He is a Messianic or “Notzri” Jew, which means he has come to believe that “Yeshua” (Jesus) was the Messiah foretold in the Old Testament.

The Bible study, which takes place Wednesdays at 6 p.m. in the back room at Jake’s Wayback Burgers, focuses on how numerous scriptures in the Torah (the first five books of the Bible) point to Jesus as being the Messiah. This was the subject of Fredrickson’s book, “Melech Mashyach (King Messiah): Responding to the Anti-Missionaries.”

Fredrickson calls the study a “Torah Portion” teaching. He said he will spend the next year going through the Torah in portions, about three chapters at a time, to allow class members to examine each portion in depth.

The text Fredrickson has chosen for the study is called “Shadows of the Messiah,” published by First Fruits of Zion. The material explains the original Hebrew meanings of certain names and terms, and makes connections with New Testament scriptures and the acts of Jesus during his ministry. It includes commentary and



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Rabbi Christopher Fredrickson is teaching a yearlong class on the Jewish roots of the Christian faith using a text called “Shadows of the Messiah” by First Fruits of Zion.

interpretations by many ancient Jewish scholars and sources.

The class is free, and Fredrickson will provide handouts for study and discussion.

Fredrickson stressed the importance of studying the original languages in which the Bible was written, as well as ancient historic and religious sources. He said that a lot of Hebrew and Aramaic words can have up to five different meanings that

depend on context and usage.

“People don’t see the fullness of the Messiah,” he said. “There’s so much more to the Messiah than they realize. When you start to look at the original languages, you really start to see that the text (of the Bible) is very three-dimensional. It’s no longer like a novel anymore.”

“This is the seventh time I’ve done a Torah portion teaching. We go through the entire Torah every year. Not a single one of them has ever been the same, and it’s because of the fact that there are so many layers to peel back.”

Fredrickson is working on a new set of books he’s calling “The Rabbinic Gospels,” a verse by verse commentary of the Aramaic translation of the New Testament gospels, which will cite ancient Jewish sources, according to his website, www.rabbinicgospels.com.

“(‘The Rabbinic Gospels’ will be) the words of our Messiah put back into their Hasidic context through the words of the (ancient Jewish) sages,” he said.

Fredrickson is putting together “The Rabbinic Gospels” with two other Jewish scholars, Marty Herz and Hillel Lugo. Noah Bearden and Christina Chuba are working alongside the three of them in technical and administrative roles, respectively. Fredrickson, Herz and Lugo discussed their motivation for undertaking this project in an informational video on the website.

“The perception out there in the masses

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is that the Torah or the Tanakh (Old Testament) is the Jewish book, and the New Testament is the Christian book, one having trumped the other,” Herz said. “I was so excited to see that, here’s a way we can show that the new writings are not ‘new’ conceptually when the sages have talked about these concepts of the coming of Mashyach ... that these are not new concepts; they are not Christian concepts; they

are Ha-Shem (God) the creator’s concepts.”

“When we read any kind of book, the idea that is so important is that we need to understand the genre of literature that we’re reading,” Lugo said. “It’s my belief that many people, when they read the New Testament, don’t exactly understand the genre of the book they they’re reading, (which makes it) easy to come to wrong conclusions or wrong interpretations.

“I believe it’s beneficial on both sides of the fence: to both the Jewish world that has not yet

come to understand Yeshua as the Mashyach, and also for the Christian world that doesn’t yet understand or recognize the totally Jewish nature of the book they’re reading.

Rabbinic Gospels also has a Facebook page, where they share information and hold comprehensive debates with rabbis and scholars around the country regarding their beliefs and research.

Those interested in the class can register by calling or texting Fredrickson at 828-391-3725.

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