

MACON CONNEXIONS

BRINGING SHALOMIES TOGETHER

Retrospective

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DR. DAVID'S DRASH

BETWEEN THE STRAITS - EXPLORING THE CONCEPTS OF NETZACH & HOD

NETZACH AND HOD AND THEIR CONNECTION WITH THE THREE WEEKS

The concepts represented by the Hebrew words *netzach* and *hod* may not be familiar to some readers, but they are important in Judaism and Torah. This lack of understanding is partly due to the difficulty of translating these words into English. Compared to Hebrew, English is a relatively young language. It did not even exist when the New Testament was written, much less the Old Testament. The Oxford Dictionary estimates that there are currently 170,000 commonly used English words, with another 47,000 obsolete words. In contrast, Biblical or ancient Hebrew is estimated to have had a potentially higher number of commonly used words based on ancient texts and inscriptions—including some words that are difficult to translate into English and even Modern Hebrew, which was revived in 1948, and currently has about 85,000 commonly used words. If a modern Hebrew-speaking Israeli were transported back to the time of Yeshua, he would find that the Jews of ancient Israel spoke a significantly different version of the Hebrew language.

Given these translational difficulties, in the Bible, *netzach* is usually translated as endurance, splendor, truthfulness, or confidence, and *hod* is usually translated as splendor, grandeur, beauty, excellence, glory, or majesty. The Strong's Concordance numbers for these words are H5331 for *netzach* and H1935 for *hod*.

Neither *netzach* nor *hod* has an equivalent word in English that matches the full concept of these terms. The best way to understand these important words is by exploring the concepts they represent.

Netzach is the loving application of mercy, grace, or *chesed*, directly derived or influenced by the wisdom (*chokhmah*) of one in authority towards someone subordinate to that authority.

Hod is the loving application of judgment, supervision, or *gevurah*, directly derived or influenced by the intelligence, understanding, or *binah* of one in authority towards someone subordinate to that authority. To better understand these definitions, let's look at some simple examples:

Netzach: A mother (one in authority) holding her toddler (her subordinate) tightly as he learns to walk because she does not want him to fall and hurt himself. Holding on to the child is a loving act of mercy derived from the wisdom that if the child fell, he could seriously hurt himself. Similarly, *netzach* is a father (one in authority) sitting next to his teenage daughter (his subordinate) in the car as she learns to drive, ready to intervene or warn her if she makes a mistake, to prevent an accident. Sitting next to his daughter ready to intervene or warn her is a loving act of mercy derived from the wisdom that if she makes a serious error while driving, she could be hurt or killed.



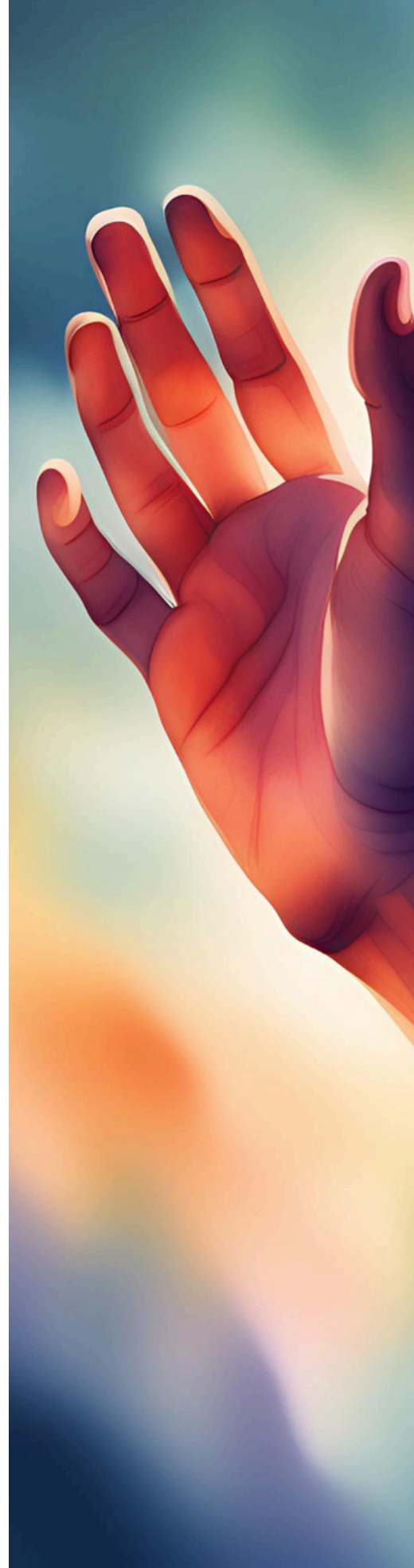
Hod: A mother (one in authority) releasing her hold on her young child (her subordinate) so that he can walk on his own. Releasing her child is based on her judgment that he is at a stage where he can attempt to walk on his own, derived from her intelligent observation that he is becoming sturdier in his steps. Similarly, *hod* is a father (one in authority) allowing his daughter (his subordinate) to drive the car solo for the first time. Allowing her to drive solo is based on the father's judgment that she has reached a level of skill and proficiency to safely operate the car, derived from his intelligent observation of her driving ability.

It should be noted that *netzach* and *hod* are both expressions of love from the one in authority to the subordinate, despite the subordinate not always perceiving it that way. The application of *netzach* almost always precedes the application of *hod*, and *netzach* is applied in greater quantity than *hod*. The transition from *netzach* to *hod* generally occurs with the authority figure giving a warning. For example, a mother might say, "Get ready baby, mommy is going to let go!" or a father might drill his daughter on driving safety before allowing her solo car trip. *Hod* tends to be harder on the authority figure; for example, a mother worries when she releases her child that he might fall, and a father worries until his daughter returns home safely after driving alone. However, *hod* is beneficial to the subordinate as the young child learns to walk and the daughter learns to drive safely.

HaShem, the *Melech HaOlam* (King of the Universe), King of All Time and Space, and Ruler of All Creation, is the ultimate authority. He is the creator of *netzach* and *hod*, and He uses their principles in His relationship with His subordinates: the children of Adam, and to a greater extent, the children of Abraham. *HaShem's* Divine Wisdom guides His use of *netzach*, and His Divine Intelligence guides His use of *hod*.

The Bible is filled with examples of *HaShem's* use of *netzach* and *hod*. For instance, Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden is an example of *netzach*, and their fall at the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is an example of *hod*. *HaShem*, being omnipotent, was aware of what was happening in the Garden and had the power to stop Adam and Eve before they sinned. However, His Divine Intelligence knew that if He did so, they would never mature and learn to be obedient on their own, resulting in a more meaningful relationship with their Creator.

Another example is Joseph living under his father's protection and teachings for seventeen years, which represents *netzach*. His being thrown into the pit by his brothers and living in captivity in Egypt for thirteen years represents *hod*. Joseph's thirteen years in captivity gave him the maturity needed to save the world from famine.



One of the best examples of how *HaShem* applies the principles of *netzach* and *hod* to His creation can be observed in the Jewish year and its calendar. The Jewish year on average is comprised of fifty-two weeks; for forty-nine of these weeks, *HaShem's netzach* is the general guiding principle during this time. However, for a period of three weeks and one day, twenty-two days, *HaShem's hod* is the dominant influence. These twenty-two days are known in Judaism as the "Three Weeks" or the "*Bein Ha-Metzarim*" (Between the Straits). The Three Weeks begin on the 17th of Tammuz and end on the 9th of Av. For forty-nine weeks, *HaShem* keeps a tight hold on His creation and His protection is dominant, like the mother holding her child as he learns to walk. But for three weeks, *HaShem* loosens His grip and protection on this world and allows His children to walk on their own.

Like the mother in the example, He warns His children that He is about to do this. According to Jewish tradition, these three weeks are a period for His children to learn and mature in their obedience to their Creator by observing His prohibitions for this appointed time. This reflects a period where the Jewish people are reminded of their vulnerabilities and the consequences of their actions. The attribute of *hod* encourages introspection, repentance, and a deeper connection to God's majesty and the splendor of His judgment.

As mentioned above, the Three Weeks is not a twenty-one-day period but a twenty-two-day period. In Judaism, numbers have special meanings, and the number "22" is the numerical value of the Hebrew word "*tohav*," meaning goodness. Orthodox Judaism teaches that when we observe the Three Weeks and its prohibitions as *HaShem* wants us to, we will experience that goodness.

On the eve of the ninth of Av, it is customary to have a simple meal of plain soup broth, a hard-boiled egg, and old bread dipped in ashes. This meal commemorates the meal that the children of Israel would have eaten on the Temple Mount prior to the destructions of the Temples. The ashes were those that fell from the sky from the burning city of Jerusalem that surrounded the Mount. The rabbis and sages have said that those who observe the Three Weeks and its prohibitions and eat the bread dipped in ashes on the eve of the ninth of Av will find the apples they dipped in honey on *Rosh HaShanah* tasting all the sweeter.

May we all be grateful for His steadfast support, protection, and endurance, as well as His commitment to uphold and sustain His creation. We know that all things occur beneath His watchful eye, and even in times of trouble, *netzach* and *hod* are working together for good.



About the Author

Dr. David Higginbotham was raised in the Southern Baptist Church and became interested in the Old Testament and Judaism when he was about seventeen years old. His grandmother then told him that his family was originally Jewish but some had converted to Christianity in the 1920s. He describes himself as an Orthodox Messianic Jew who loves studying the Torah and has taught Torah classes for more than 30 years.



WHY SHALOM MACON?

5 REASONS SHALOMIES LOVE SHALOM MACON

A recent post on Shalom@Home asked for the top three reasons Shalomies chose Shalom Macon. Not surprisingly, most answers fell into the same few categories.

Here is a summary of reasons Shalomies love their synagogue family.

Many responses were simply “HaShem led me here.” All agreed we are seeing a mighty work as our G-d draws us together into a family with a mission that is reaching around the globe!

Baruch HaShem!

TOP REASONS SHALOMIES LOVE THEIR SYNAGOGUE FAMILY

1

THE WORSHIP

Shacharit prayers, music, in-depth quality teaching that presents truth, is sound, and exalts Yeshua.

2

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

This includes the access to technology that gives real time streaming as well as recordings available at any time. Especially appreciated is the hybrid events that are live streamed allowing all online Shalomies to participate in festivals and special events.

3

SHALOMIES HAVE A HOME

Shalomies feel accepted, safe, supported, welcomed, heard, loved, celebrated, understood, and fed. Words like community, family, hospitable, uplifting, networking, friends, and like-minded were mentioned many times.

4

GROUPS & CONNECTIONS

Through Shalom@Home many shared the value of various groups such as Mussar, Torah on Tap, the Women’s Group, Torah Club, and FFOZ connection.

5

LEADERSHIP

The most often mentioned reason to love Shalom Macon is the leaders: Rabbi, Darren, Lance, and Dave received many kudos. Words like educated, scholar, real, honest, musically talented, creative, caring, supportive, awesome, amazing, fun, spirited, passionate, polished, quirky, quality, reverent, engaging, humble, and unique are just some of the many endearing attributes for our leaders.

EXPERIENCE ISRAEL

REMEMBERING THE LAND

By Elizabeth Williams

Ever since I joined the Messianic movement about 25 years ago, I have had a huge desire to go to Israel. Every time I heard about a trip, I wanted to go, but it just was not possible for one reason or another. When Shalom Macon announced their trip in 2023, *HaShem* just spoke to me and told me “This is your trip.” After those words were confirmed by some family members and friends, I decided to go. It was well worth the 25-year wait because with Rabbi Damian and Kelli leading us and Shlomo as our tour guide, my experience was something so special that I am sure it would not have been as meaningful had I gone with anyone else.



“
If I forget you, O
Jerusalem, let my
right hand wither.
May my tongue
cling to the roof of
my
mouth if I cease to
remember you, if I
do not set Jerusalem
above my chief joy

— PSALM 137:5-6

I had the privilege of sitting directly behind Rabbi and Kelli on the bus. I got to see firsthand just how much planning and rearranging went into coordinating this trip. They were both very committed to making sure we had the best experience possible. And if you think like me that the worship at Shalom Macon is great, every time Rabbi brought out his guitar in the land, it was Shabbat multiplied by ten! Worshiping *HaShem* in His land is just something too amazing for words. Rabbi poured his heart into his music, and it made some of the most memorable impressions on me in those places. I was also blessed to be helped by our Rabbi in a matter that was very difficult for me. It gave me an insightful view of our Rabbi and Rebbetzin.

Shlomo, our tour guide, set the mood and tone for our trip in so many ways. He would often sing for us and encouraged us to let the music end in silence rather than by clapping. He had connections to people and access to places in the land that no other tour guides did. But the thing I appreciated the most was his honesty and forthrightness. So many times he would tell us that many of the “traditional” places of the happenings were only tradition, and it was much more likely they occurred in a different place. I also know that he was very touched and impressed at things we knew and honored as our tradition. One such thing was that we knew how to sing the 23rd Psalm in Hebrew (Darren Huckey knew it from memory). Another thing was that we knew not to pronounce the sacred name of *HaShem*. There are so many wonderful things about our tour guide that I could say. He touched my life in a very personal way when I had trouble at the holocaust museum. I will never forget him and hope that I will have at least one more chance to follow his green hat through the crowds of tourists.





One thing that Shlomo impressed upon us was that this was the only place in the world where G-d was in the actual physical land. Every tree, flower, or grain of sand contained the presence of *HaShem*. When I walked through that land, I could often feel His presence very near to me. When I planned this trip, I never expected my life to change so entirely, but that is what happened there. So many places contributed to that, but I will highlight just a few of those places.

First there is Magdala. This was a very recently found site, and it was the only place that Shlomo said he was 95% sure in its accuracy that they had found the home synagogue of Yeshua! To see where Yeshua learned, taught, and discussed Torah was just mind blowing! But what was even more is something I almost cannot describe. There was just such a real presence of G-d that I could feel in that place. It was as if Yeshua Himself was standing next to me. It made me just burn with the desire to sit at the Master's feet and listen to everything He had to say. They had even made a replica of the *bimah* in the synagogue. I would love to hear the Master, Himself, give a *davar Torah* (lesson from the Torah).

The next place that stood out to me was when we were on the Mount of Olives looking at the "Messiah's Gate" through which He will enter the city when he returns. The gate had been sealed shut with cement by the Muslims. As we sat there, Rabbi led us in the song "Days of Elijah". As I sang those words, I had a clear picture come to my mind of Messiah's triumphant return and how He would break right through that cement and lead His army to capture Jerusalem. Whenever I sing that song now, I will always see that picture in my mind.

By far, the place that made the most impact in my life was the *Kotel*—the Wailing Wall. This is the western wall of the Temple Mount. It is the closest place that any Jewish person can get to the Holy of Holies. It was here that *HaShem* put the final seal of approval on my Jewish identity. I have always struggled with being Jewish because my Judaism comes from my father's line and not my mother's. That is generally not accepted in the Jewish world. On this trip, I was assured that Rabbi Damian fully accepted my heritage and Judaism as authentic. There were many other things that just kept assuring me that this land was my heritage and my birthright. When we went to the *Kotel*, we visited an adjacent building where we saw a short movie called "The Chain of Generations". It encouraged us to continue to pass down our faith and traditions to the next generation. *HaShem* used that movie to strongly impress on me that this was my identity and my job was to help prepare the next generations. That day, I so fully embraced who I was as a Jewish person and the life that *HaShem* has called me to live.

And if that was not enough, *HaShem* met me at the wall when I went to pray. Long before leaving on the trip, *HaShem* told me He had an appointment with me at the wall. He was so real and so close there. As I poured out my heart, He answered me and spoke to me. I drew so near to Him and when I did, He drew near to me just like He promised.



It was the most incredible place in the world to be. The time we were allotted for prayer barely felt like five minutes. I wanted to stay forever. I did not want to leave. I got to pray at the *Kotel* one other time the evening before we left. As we were waiting to finish, I turned to my friend saying "You know what this feels like? This feels like saying goodbye to a lover at the airport." And my friend agreed.

I would now love to go back at least one more time and introduce my husband to the land that I now realize is my birthright. I long to go back and be that close to *HaShem* once again. I think everyone on our tour would agree that if there is any way possible for anyone to get to Israel, then by all means, go! It changed my life in so many ways and was the sweetest time with *HaShem* that I may ever experience on this side of eternity.

BOOK NOW »

Experience Israel Tour
hosted by Rabbi Damian and Kelli.

View brochure and register at:
registernow.ittworld.com
Tour code: **Eisner25**
Email kelli@shalomacon.org with questions

March 2-12, 2025

MACON THE MOVE



The Turner Family

AN ANTHOLOGY

For a while now, I have wanted to share my family's journey with our Shalomies both near and far, but in full transparency, I have been holding my breath in what Rabbi Damian has sometimes referred to as "foreboding joy". Here's to writing in faith that He Who began a good work will be faithful to complete it! This is the Turners' story from Melissa's perspective:

There are seven people in my family and some of you who are very close to the situation, so there are probably quite a few versions of what can only be called the Turner Travails, or better put now, the Turner Testimony! We began attending what is now Shalom Macon back in 2015. Funny thing is we lived only an hour away for the first few years of Nachamu Ami's existence but knew nothing about it. In late 2010, Jeff's company transferred him to Arkansas where we immediately discovered the Huckey family. Messianic circles run small, especially in central Arkansas! Our story with the Huckeys could be its own book but suffice it to say that the connection was instant, and their friendship has been a constant source of strength and fellowship for over thirteen years. The book would probably be called Turkey Adventures, because what do you get when you put a Turner with a Huckey? A "Turkey"!

In what would become "Turner style", we moved back to Georgia after just one year in Arkansas, but the friendships we made there have been lasting, especially with the Huckeys. I believe it was in 2013 when Darren told us he was coming to Macon to teach a conference on prayer.

He had connected online with Damian Eisner and well, you all know the rest of the story. We visited the synagogue for the first time later in 2013 and then once or twice more in 2014 even though at that time we lived in South Carolina. In "Turner style", we moved a lot due to Jeff's job situation in logistics and production management.

During this season, Jeff worked a night shift in Camden, South Carolina, and we actively applied for jobs back in Arkansas and Georgia. In 2015, he accepted a position that would land us close to his hometown near Augusta, Georgia, and two hours from Macon. We bought the farm, literally, and prepared to finally plant some roots. At this point, the Huckeys grieved the reality that we would never move back to Arkansas. Still, they made annual trips to Georgia, and we did the same to Arkansas. On one of their trips in August, 2015, the Huckeys gave us some shocking and incredible news that their family was moving to Macon. As I said earlier, you all know the rest of that story!

The next few years entailed two layoffs, a surprise and extremely difficult pregnancy, the birth of our fifth child (also our second cleft affected child who required three surgeries his first year of life), bankruptcy, a new job for Jeff in my hometown of Albany, Georgia, prepping the farm to rent or sell, living apart from Jeff for about eight months while we figured things out, and then finally settling in Albany at the end of 2018. At this point we still attended the synagogue as often as we could and made not a few, but many beautiful and lifelong friendships. Things finally settled down for us, or so it seemed. We were still two hours from Macon, now south instead of northeast, but we were fine. We did not mind the drive, and I enjoyed the nostalgia of being back in my hometown and getting very involved in the homeschool and tennis communities.

PERMISSION TO LAND?



On Rosh Hashanah, 2022, everything changed. Did I mention that major life events always seem to happen for us at either Pesach or the High Holy Days? Through what I can only call corporate treachery (and obviously Hashem's will), Jeff's position was terminated. This one hurt a lot. He did quickly receive an alternative job offer, but it was a huge pay cut and moved him to Savannah. In his mind, what else could he do? Our family could not afford to move with him and his living arrangements were less than ideal. Things quickly went south in every area...our finances, the job and housing situation, our marriage, and the mental and physical health of one of our children, resulting in multiple ER visits and subsequent hospital stays. I still cannot find the words to express how hard it was just to get up in the morning and do the things that needed to get done. I can remember teaching tennis last summer with at least 8-10 kids on the court and while we all picked up balls, I would just walk to the fence and cry—but only for a minute. Then I would take a deep breath and get through the next hour...and then the next day.

It was a strange dichotomy of feeling so hopeless, but also knowing Hashem could change the story in an instant. It truly felt like living in the Twilight Zone, except when I made the drive to Shabbat services. That was the only time I felt truly peaceful and knew that at that moment I was right where I needed to be.

Things hit the breaking point in July of last year, but that is also when G-d made a way. He used other people from Shalom Macon to do it, but isn't that exactly why we are called the body of Messiah? Jeff applied and interviewed in Macon and Albany and doors seemed to inch open, but then they were slammed shut. It became clear that the only way to keep our family intact was to leave Albany and find a way to get us under the same roof in the Savannah area.

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On Rosh Hashanah,
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us at either Pesach
or the High Holy
Days?

—MELISSA TURNER

At this point, Jeff had been living apart from the family for ten months. The move that needed to happen did happen in August, but things did not improve overnight in any area. We were now two and a half hours from Macon but still coming as often as possible. Through much struggle, prayer, tears, and countless conversations with a few special people who G-d used in a very real way to keep me from sinking, things started to improve. And then, look what Hashem did...and is doing even as I type this!

Jeff received word in February that the position we thought long gone was open and his package was being submitted for hire. This was the job that seemed so far out of reach but the one he really wanted. It did not seem real, but at the same time, there was a shift behind the scenes that made it so clear to me that G-d sees us and He has us right where He wants us. Remember when I said big things happen for us around Pesach? The morning of the last day of the festival, as we prepared to travel to Macon for the Meal of Messiah, Jeff received his firm offer and start date.

As I type this, he starts work on Monday in Warner Robins (just south of Macon), we are packing up our townhouse, and we are under contract for a house in Macon. It just happens to be one street over from the infamous Shalom Macon “cult de sac”! In almost 23 years of this Messianic walk, we have never lived in the same city as our congregation, much less spitting distance from some of our closest friends.

Here we are counting the Omer and within the same count to Shavuot is our count to Macon the Move! After almost ten years of orbiting a two-hour radius around Macon, in His perfect timing and compassion, the Holy One has given us permission to land!



SHALOMIES ABROAD

LONDON CALLING!



UNITED
KINGDOM

Several Shalomies are scattered across England, Wales, and Scotland in the United Kingdom of Great Britain. We may even have some in Ireland that we are unaware of!

When Shalomies from the same country connect, meet, and share meaningful time, exciting things happen. Joanna Kinch from Gwersyllt, Wales, and Karen Forbes from London, England, have done just that. The following is a story from Joanna about her and Karen's adventures since meeting via the Shalom Macon online community.

As we approached the end of 2022, Karen and I began building a relationship. It was a pleasant surprise to discover that we are the same age and share similar interests. We are both very hands-on people. Our friendship continued to blossom in 2023, and with that, we arranged a visit to Wrexham, the metropolis of North Wales (now made famous on Disney by the two fellas from the US who bought Wrexham Association Football Club [AFC]). The visit was arranged so Karen and her daughter could celebrate the second seder of Pesach with us at our home in Gwersyllt, along with Lesley Gilbert who meets with us regularly in person for Torah Club and Shalom Macon live online. They stayed nearby, allowing me to take them on a little tour of the pretty places near the Berwyn Mountain range, taking in the Panorama, Horseshoe Pass, and the picturesque town of Llangollen. The sheep run freely across the mountains and are accustomed to visitors. We had a wonderful time together and Karen survived her drive in the mountains!



“

In February of this year, I felt “London Calling” again! I managed to get a bargain and stayed in a beautiful historic hotel on Buckingham Palace Road...just what the Great Physician ordered!

— JOANNA KINCH

In August, 2023, I returned the favour and visited London, staying a few days in the capital which was a vast change from life in the village. Karen was an excellent host, showing me some Jewish areas to get supplies for Shabbat and other places I had never been before. We also had the privilege of meeting with Nicole Cumberbatch for an evening meal. I do not know where we went; all I know is we got there by Uber taxi which was an experience in the Tesla car! My husband, Ralph, and I had hoped to host Karen and her daughter, Jillesse, for Hanukkah, but sadly, industrial action with train travel prevented that.

However, in February of this year, I felt “London Calling” again! I managed to get a bargain and stayed in a beautiful historic hotel on Buckingham Palace Road...just what the Great Physician ordered! This time, I managed to navigate my way around with the help of Google Maps and London taxis.



Karen's daughter, Jillesse, and I went on the tourist route and visited the Museum of London to take in the Fashion City exhibition which Karen had discovered. I learned to sew on a machine at a young age and used it to make my clothes. I love textiles and colour, so this was particularly interesting because it was a celebration of the Jewish Londoners who helped build the capital's reputation as a fashion centre. It was a fascinating exhibition uncovering the identity of famous and well-loved names in the clothing industry throughout the UK. The exhibition shows how G-d's precious people fleeing persecution in Eastern Europe adapted to their surroundings, adjusted their names, and used their gifts from Hashem to make a living and bless so many with beautiful garments to wear. The exhibition featured fashion, photography, and social history items, including a Bellville Sassoon coat worn by Princess Diana on the day she announced her pregnancy with Prince William, and a Mr. Fish dressing gown worn by thespian Sir Noel Coward! Due to illness, Karen could not attend, but Jillesse did a fantastic job looking after this country girl in London. We all had a lovely time together. Due to work commitments, I could not stay as long as I wanted, but I praise Hashem for the opportunity. Maybe we can get together during Hanukkah or Passover in 2025.

I find it fascinating how Hashem, in His infinite wisdom, leads us to places and people we would have never met without His guidance, and this makes our lives much richer. May we all be open to His calling and prompting!



Karen



Jillesse

Joanna



SHALOMIES IN THE STATES

KRISTI HOLZ

Becoming acquainted with Shalom Macon was initially through FFOZ. I then began listening to Rabbi Damian's teachings on podcasts. This led to researching Shalom Macon and at that time, I became aware there would be a *Shavuot* conference at Shalom Macon in 2023. I felt convicted to attend. So I brought a female friend with me, and we were richly blessed by the congregants.

This was the first time I had witnessed and participated in a Messianic Jewish liturgy service, and it resonated deep within my soul. When it was stated we are here, not for our benefit, but to worship in the manner *HaShem* desires, I was moved. This is what I, too, wanted to do for *HaShem*.

After coming home, I joined Shalom at Home and began watching services online. I requested a "task" I could do from afar to be of service and having been doing that as need arises.

I have been seeking what it means to worship in spirit and truth since 1992. This has led me on along journey which led to keeping Sabbath and observing the *Moedim*.



“

I am so blessed to
be part of a
community that
deeply loves
HaShem and serves
Him with their
hearts, minds, and
strength. *Baruch*
HaShem!

— KRISTI HOLZ



In my local community I am a Torah Club leader, attend online Shalom Macon services, attend a non-denominational church, and volunteer in that church making quilts for children's charities and local police for battered women. The group is named *Stitch & Chatter*. All projects are completed through donations and volunteer work. The annual goal is to donate 100 quilts and 100 pillowcases. Each quilt takes 6 yards of fabric plus batting. Each pillowcase requires 1 yard of fabric. If anyone is led to donate fabric or money to purchase supplies, it may be sent to First Christian Church, % *Stitch and Chatter*, PO Box 130, Pandora, IA 50216.

I am so blessed to be part of a community that deeply loves *HaShem* and serves Him with their hearts, minds, and strength. *Baruch HaShem!*

Fun Facts About Kristi:

Kristi has done many different types of work from parenting to factory work to teaching agriculture. Today farming is her main occupation. Kristi farmed with her father for over 30 years. She recently inherited a portion of his farm and is currently sharecropping with a cousin.

Kristi enjoys gardening, sewing, quilting, and various needlework crafts.

Kristi has one son and is about to become a grandmother for the first time!



YOUTH MUSSAR



EXPLORING THE POWER OF THE PRACTICE

The power of Mussar really comes alive in community, and that is exactly what the youth at Shalom Macon experienced earlier this year. This past February through April, 2024, marked the first installment of Youth Mussar sessions at Shalom Macon, led by April Townsley. Every Friday over twenty youth met online to share in their faith by building a common connection to the tradition of Mussar, rooted in the wisdom of Torah.

Spring 2024 Youth Mussar classes offered the beginning of a beautiful life practice for Shalom Macon youth. Together, they learned about Mussar practice and delved into the study and life practices for five *middot*:

- Humility / Anavah
- Patience / Savlanut
- Gratitude / Hakarat Hatov
- Honor / Kavod
- Lovingkindness / Chesed

Meeting over Mussar gave students opportunities to get to know themselves better and to have a connection point to get to know each other better and deepen friendships.

Here are some comments from the Spring 2024 Youth Mussar chevruta:

- "It is a good way to better understand yourself and others."
- "It is so fun to meet people and learn new things."
- "It is a helpful class that helps you learn how to deal with others the right way."
- "It's amazing, and I love it!"

The Shalom Macon Youth Mussar class is taking a break for summer but plans to reconvene again later this year to continue Mussar studies. Stay tuned for information on when the next session will meet.



HASHEM'S CARE

THE WORTHAMS SHARE HASHEM'S CARE & PROVISION



The Wortham Trio would like to give a shout of praise and gratitude to Hashem for Steve's health revolution in the past nine and a half months! Last year Steve was diagnosed with stage five chronic kidney disease from an autoimmune disorder. Less than six months later, we traveled to Atlanta for a kidney transplant, thanks to the generosity of his brother Mark's donation. The transplant surgeon said afterwards that Steve would not have survived much longer with his current kidneys—they were that poor! Immediately, however, I could see a difference in Steve. When they brought him into his patient room, his countenance had a light that I had not seen in a couple of years!

Because of your prayers and Hashem's mercy, the additional kidney has allowed Steve to start regaining his health. He truly is a new man, and I am beyond thankful to have my husband back and for my daughter to be able to connect with her daddy again. So many of you donated money after surgery so that we did not have to cook dinner for almost two months after his surgery. Others came over before surgery to pressure wash and stain our fence and do other yard-related projects. Thank you!

Two and a half months ago I had a hysterectomy, something I had been putting off because of Steve's health. (Wortham organ count: Steve +1, Karen -1, family net 0) Not only was my recovery time helpful for me to rest, but it allowed me to see just how far the Lord had brought Steve. Last year he struggled to make it through the day. This year, after working a full eight hours, Steve cooked dinner, cleaned the dishes, put our daughter to bed, and then checked to see how I was doing.

“

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after his
surgery. Others
came over before
surgery to pressure
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fence and do other
yard-related
projects. Thank you!

Thank you! Your
gifts fed (literally
and spiritually) us
more than you can
know.

—KAREN WORTHAM

By the end of the day he was tired (who wouldn't be!) but he was not destroyed. He got up the next day to do it all again...and again to some extent for two weeks! During Shabbat services our daughter usually asks to be held during the prayers. Since I could not, Steve easily lifted and held her week after week--something that would have been impossible for even a couple of minutes last summer!

Steve and I continue to be amazed at the changes we have experienced since last year. We want to express our deepest gratitude to our Shalomies near and far for holding us up when we were weak and in need. We love you all and look forward to continuing to grow as a family of three in the midst of our larger family of believers.



BUILDERS NOT BYSTANDERS

SHALOM MACON'S EXCITING NEW CHAPTER

Shalom Macon has always been more than just a physical space; it's a global community united by faith, fellowship, and shared purpose. Thanks to the power of technology, our synagogue has transcended geographical boundaries, offering a welcoming home for prayer, celebration, support, worship, and joyful connection—both in person and online. And now, we are thrilled to announce a significant expansion that will enhance our ability to serve and connect with our community.

Our new building campaign, "Builders Not Bystanders," is an invitation to each of you to play a vital role in this exciting transformation. We're expanding our facilities to better accommodate the vibrant life of our community, particularly during the Lord's Festivals, which are major highlights at Shalom Macon. With the addition of a new kitchen, we'll be able to host more people for festival meals and celebrations, ensuring that every "Shalomie," whether local or visiting, feels the warmth and joy of our holiday gatherings. We're also adding new gathering spaces to foster conversation and relationship-building, strengthening the bonds that make our community so special.

The plans for this expansion are already completed and have been submitted for county approval. Our contractor, Mitchell, is ready to start, and by the time you read this, construction will likely be underway. We're on track to make significant progress, with our eyes set on welcoming hundreds of you to Shalom Macon for a grand Sukkot celebration this year. We're counting on your prayers and support to see this project through to completion in time for this spiritually meaningful event.



Thanks to your incredible generosity, we have already saved nearly two-thirds of the funding needed for this project. That's an INCREDIBLE blessing for a community this size! I extend my heartfelt thanks to all who have contributed. However, to achieve our goal without borrowing from the bank, we need to raise the remaining \$250,000 by the end of the year. If you've already given, thank you! We ask you to continue supporting us until the job is done. If you haven't yet donated, now is the perfect time. Whether it's a monthly gift or a meaningful one-time donation, your contribution will make you a part of building our community at Shalom Macon.

To donate, simply follow this link, select the Building Fund, and become a builder with us!

We are deeply grateful for your support and commitment. Together, we are not just bystanders but builders of a vibrant, global community that benefits so many around the world. Thank you for being a part of this exciting journey with Shalom Macon. Let's build something amazing together!

With gratitude and anticipation,

Rabbi Damian Eisner

Shalom Macon

Check out [Shalomacon/build](#). This link will take you to the dedicated page explaining everything you need to know about how you can be a builder. And for the true lovers of plans and architecture, we've included two pages from the code plans for your enjoyment.

DONATE

CODE REVIEW FOR:

BUILDING CODE REVIEW
 NEW ADDITIONS AND RENOVATIONS
 SHALOM MACON
 6733 NEW FORSYTH ROAD
 MACON, GEORGIA 31210

I. AUTHORITY HAVING JURISDICTION:
 GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
 38 WEST MAIN STREET
 FORTY-SEVEN, GEORGIA 31029
 PH: 478-994-7618

II. APPLICABLE CODES:

- A. 2018 INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE WITH GEORGIA AMENDMENTS (2018 IBC)
- B. 2018 EDITION, NFPA 101 LIFE SAFETY CODE WITH GEORGIA AMENDMENTS (2018 LSC)
- C. 2018 INTERNATIONAL PLUMBING CODE WITH GEORGIA AMENDMENTS (2018 IPC)
- D. 2018 INTERNATIONAL MECHANICAL CODE WITH GEORGIA AMENDMENTS (2018 IMC)
- E. 2018 INTERNATIONAL FIRE CODE WITH GEORGIA AMENDMENTS (2018 IFC)
- F. 2018 NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CODE (2018 NEC)
- G. 2018 NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION (NFPA) 704
- H. 2015 INTERNATIONAL ENERGY CONSERVATION CODE WITH GEORGIA SUPPLEMENTS AND AMENDMENTS (2015 IECC)
- I. 2010 INTERNATIONAL JUNE 18th SYMPOSIUM
- J. 2010 INTERNATIONAL COMMISSIONER, CHAPTER 120-3, RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE STATE MINIMUM FIRE SAFETY STANDARDS
- K. ADOPTED AMENDMENTS AND ORDINANCES FOR MONROE COUNTY

III. EXISTING BUILDINGS AND NEW ADDITIONS FEATURES:

- A. EXISTING BUILDING AREA - 8,335 SF
- B. NEW ADDITIONS BUILDING AREA - 1,254 SF
- C. NEW ADDITIONS BUILDING AREA - 1,254 SF
- D. NUMBER OF EXISTING/NEW EXTERIOR EXITS
- E. NUMBER OF EXISTING/NEW EXITS - 21/27 (A-1.1)
- F. EXISTING AND NEW CONSTRUCTION - TYPE I/II (USE TABLE 13.1.6)
- G. CONSTRUCTION, ALTERATIONS, OR DEMOLITION OPERATIONS - COMPLY WITH IBC 13.11.4
- H. CONSTRUCTION - NO REQUIREMENTS IBC 13.1.6
- I. AUTOMATIC SPRINKLER SYSTEM PROVIDED - NO
- J. FIRE ALARM SYSTEM - EXISTING FACILITY HAS A FIRE ALARM SYSTEM (USE 9.6.1.3 AND NFPA 72)
- K. EXISTING EXTERIOR LIGHTING - COMPLY WITH 2018 IBC
- L. EXISTING EXTERIOR LIGHTING - COMPLY WITH IBC 10.4.10.2
- M. EXISTING EQUIPMENT - COMPLY WITH IBC 13.2.2 AND IBC 2.2 AND NFPA 96

IV. GENERAL BUILDING LIMITATIONS:

- A. MAX. HEIGHT AND STORES SPANNING LENGTH - 40 FT. HEIGHT AND 1 STORY (IBC TABLE 504.3 AND TABLE 504.4)
- B. MAX. ALLOWABLE AREA - NEW ADDITIONS - 25 FT. AND 1 STORY
- C. MAX. ALLOWABLE AREA - NEW ADDITIONS - 6,000 SF (IBC TABLE 506.2) ACTUAL = 1,254 SF

V. MEANS OF EGRESS:

- 1. TOTAL EXISTING AND NEW ADDITIONS OCCUPANCY LOAD = 565 PERSONS
- 2. TOTAL NEW ADDITIONS AND RENOVATIONS OCCUPANCY LOAD = 99 PERSONS

VI. ARRANGEMENT OF MEANS OF EGRESS:

- 1. MAX. TRAVEL DISTANCE TO EXITS - NO SPRINKLER SYSTEM = 200 FT. (USE 13.2.6.3)
- 2. ACTUAL MAX. TRAVEL DISTANCE = 99 FT.
- 3. MAX. DEAD END CORRIDOR - NO SPRINKLER SYSTEM = 20 FT. (USE 13.2.3.3)
- 4. ACTUAL DEAD END CORRIDOR = NONE
- 5. MAX. COMMON PATH OF TRAVEL - NO SPRINKLER SYSTEM = 25 FT. (USE 13.2.3.3)
- 6. MAX. COMMON PATH OF TRAVEL - NO SPRINKLER SYSTEM = 25 FT. (USE 13.2.3.3)
- 7. MAX. COMMON PATH OF TRAVEL - NO SPRINKLER SYSTEM = 25 FT. (USE 13.2.3.3)
- 8. MAX. COMMON PATH OF TRAVEL - NO SPRINKLER SYSTEM = 25 FT. (USE 13.2.3.3)
- 9. EXISTING/NEW ADDITIONS 24 INCHES OF CLEAR WIDTH - 34 INCHES - 0.2 INCHES - 220 PERSONS/4.00 SF
- 10. EXISTING/NEW ADDITIONS 36 INCHES OF CLEAR WIDTH - 36 INCHES - 0.2 INCHES - 220 PERSONS/4.00 SF
- 11. EXISTING/NEW ADDITIONS 48 INCHES OF CLEAR WIDTH - 48 INCHES - 0.2 INCHES - 220 PERSONS/4.00 SF

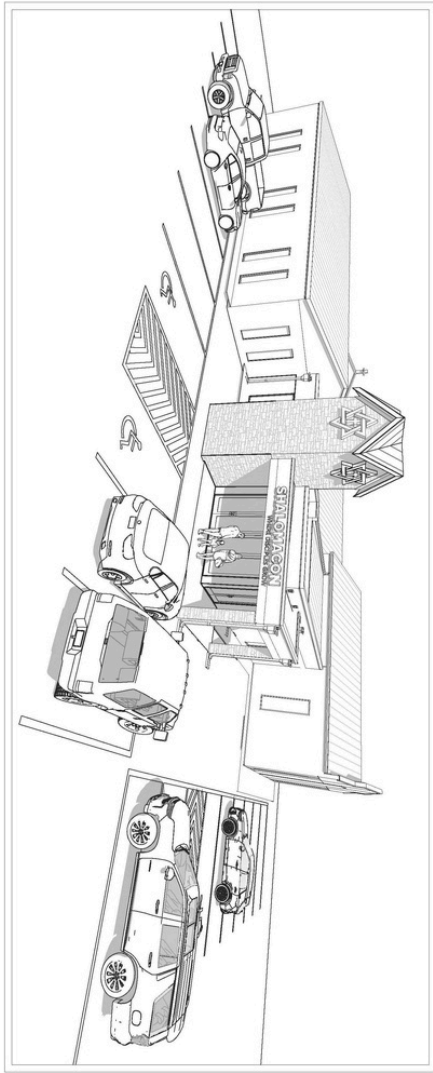
VII. TOTAL EXIT CAPACITY:

- 1. EXISTING ASSEMBLY OCCUPANCY WITH ADDITIONS AND RENOVATIONS
- 2. TOTAL FACILITY OCCUPANT LOAD = 565 PERSONS
- 3. EXIT CAPACITY EQUIURED - 2 EXITS - 4 DOOR LEAVES x 170 PERSONS/LEAF = 680 PERSONS
- 4. EXIT CAPACITY EQUIURED - 2 EXITS - 4 DOOR LEAVES x 170 PERSONS/LEAF = 680 PERSONS
- 5. ACTUAL OCCUPANT LOAD/DOOR - 565 PERSONS / 4 DOOR LEAVES = 21 PERSONS/LEAF

VIII. SCOPE OF WORK:

The existing worship facility (8,335 SF) is a combination one-story pre-engineered building and two adjoining conventionally framed buildings. The facility will have a new greening area with coffee bar addition (1,565 SF) with a new corridor (137 SF) connecting the new greening area to an existing adjoining building. This new addition will be added to (abutting) where the existing facility's kitchen (181 SF) is located. This facility will also have a new men's restroom (153 SF) addition. A portion of the existing classroom building will be converted/renewed to provide a new men's restroom (153 SF) addition. Some addition of existing spaces including walls (overall floor plan) will be retained. 5,864 square feet of the existing worship facility (see overall floor plan) will not involve any new work. The worship facility will remain operational during the new additions and renovations phases of work.

ADDITIONS AND RENOVATIONS FOR:



SHEET INDEX

- LS-1 Life Safety Plan
- A-1 Site Plan
- A-2 Foundation Plan & Details
- A-3 Overall Floor Plan
- A-4 Large Scale Kitchen Plans & Elevations
- A-5 Large Scale Men's Room and Schedules
- A-6 Large Scale Entry Floor Plan
- A-7 Reflective Ceiling Plan
- A-8 Exterior Elevations
- A-9 Exterior Elevations
- A-10 Roof Plan
- A-11 Details
- A-12 Details
- A-13 Building Section
- M-001 Floor Plan - Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning Layout
- M-100 Part Floor Plan - Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning Layout
- M-101 HVAC Specifications, Schedules, Notes And Details
- M-102 Kitchen Exhaust Specifications, Schedules, Notes And Details
- P-001 Floor Plan - Soil, Waste & Vent Piping Layout
- P-002 Floor Plan - Hot And Cold Water Piping Layout
- P-100 Part Floor Plan - Soil, Waste & Vent Piping Layout
- P-200 Part Floor Plan - Hot And Cold Water Piping Layout
- P-300 Plumbing Specifications, Schedules, Notes And Details
- E-100 Part Floor Plan - Lighting Layout
- E-200 Electrical Specifications, Schedules, Notes, And Details

CONSTRUCTION TYPE: V-B

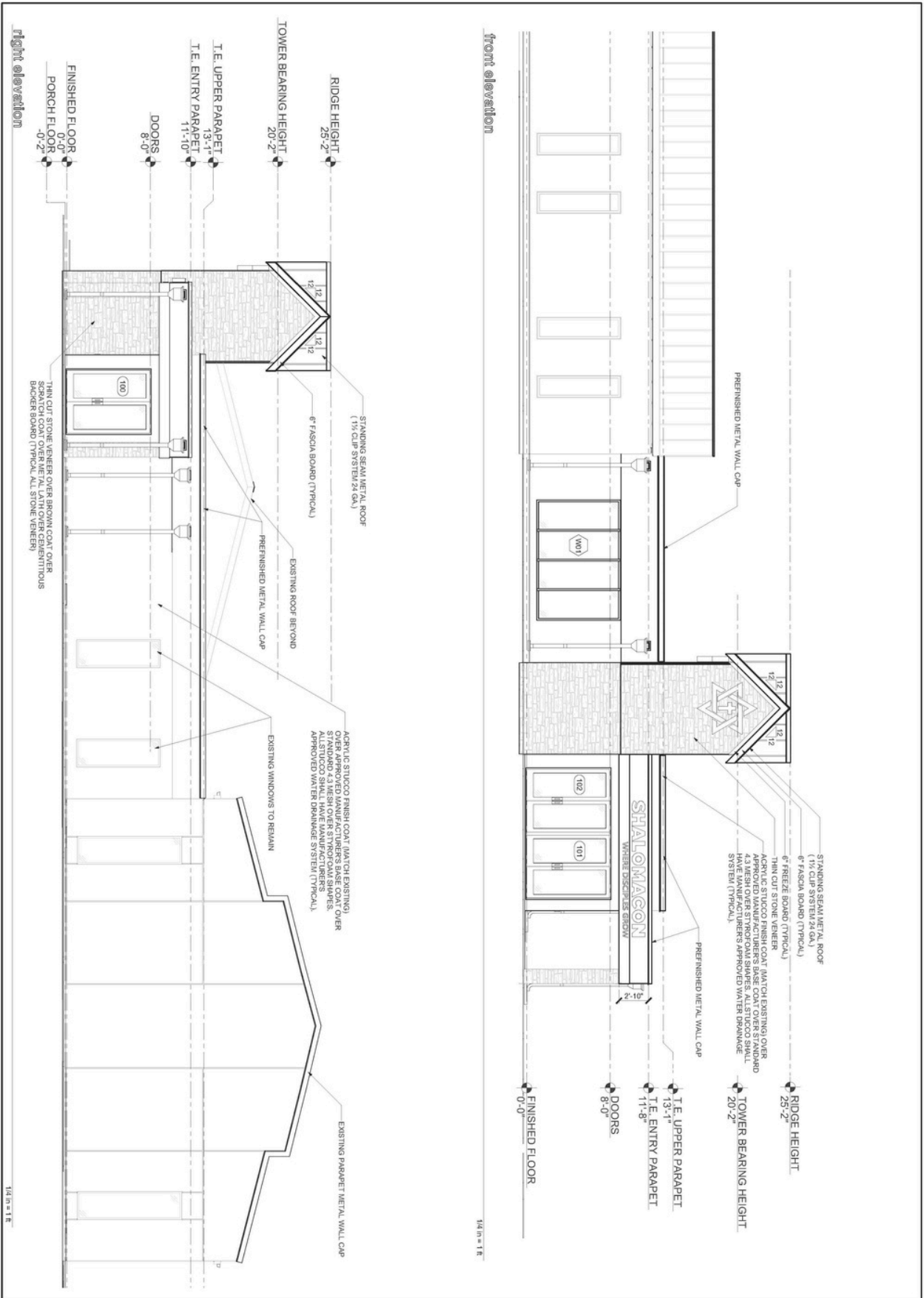
SITE LOCATION MAP:



ADDITIONS AND RENOVATIONS FOR:
SHALOM MACON
 6733 NEW FORSYTH ROAD
 MACON, GA 31210

DESIGN SOLUTIONS
 3735 VINEVILLE AVE.
 (478) 477-0067

DATE: April 15, 2024
 SHEET NUMBER: T-1



<p>A-8</p> <p>DATE: April 15, 2024 SHEET NUMBER</p>	<p>m&h DESIGN SOLUTIONS</p> <p>3735 VINEVILLE AVE (478) 477-6097</p>	<p>ADDITIONS AND RENOVATIONS FOR: SHALOM MACON</p> <p>6733 NEW FORSYTH ROAD MACON, GA 31210</p>	<p>April 15, 2024</p>
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MOSES AND THE JOURNEY TO LEADERSHIP

Dr. Norman J. Cohen

A BOOK REVIEW BY NICOLE PERSAUD

Why This Book :

Many of us find ourselves in leadership positions, be it in our place of worship, in the home, and/or especially at work. Leadership is not for the faint, primarily because we have to address our own shortcomings to be a great leader. This book is powerful as it takes a deep dive into Moses as a leader and explores the trials and triumphs of leadership. This book shows how the brilliance of Moses as a leader can be modeled anywhere: at home, in your place of worship, and especially in the office.

You Should Read This Book If:

- ✓ *You manage people in an office*
- ✓ *You lead an outreach or ministry of any kind*
- ✓ *You work with volunteers*
- ✓ *You feel overwhelmed as a leader*
- ✓ *You have trouble asking for help*
- ✓ *You feel like you cannot trust your team*
- ✓ *You ended up in a leadership position, but have no idea how you got it*
- ✓ *You are dealing with impostor syndrome as a leader*

What this book covers:

Chapter 1: Showing the Potential for Leadership – How to identify potential leaders in your organization. What characteristics stand out?

Chapter 2: The Calling: Overcoming Self-Doubt – How to handle imposter syndrome and the feeling that you are not good enough to be a leader.

Chapter 3: The Vision of Leadership– A leader without a vision is not a leader at all. Why vision as a leader is important.

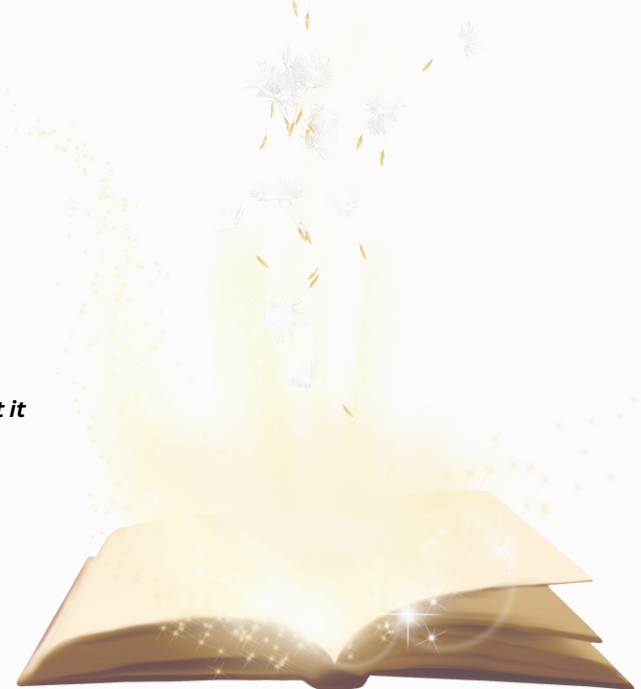
Chapter 4: We Possess the Power and the Ability - What qualifies us to be a leader?


Chapter 5: The Leader’s Unique Song – How to find your voice as a leader.

Chapter 6: We Can Survive the Desert and Sweeten the Waters – How faith and optimism play a powerful role in how you lead.

Chapter 7: The Burden of Leadership – How to respond to the bitterness and doubt of those whom you lead.

Chapter 8: The Leader Needs Support – Who are you surrounding yourself with? How to choose the team that will help you be the best leader you can be.





Chapter 9: A Key to Leadership: Empowerment – If you keep all the power, you aren’t an effective leader. Delegate, delegate delegate!!!!

Chapter 10: The Leader’s Vision – It is not enough for leaders to have a vision; they have to communicate it to those who lead, and it has to become their vision, too.

Chapter 11: In the Face of Challenge and Rejection – How do you respond when those you lead challenge a decision or reject you?

Chapter 12: Hearing Criticism: Knowing How to Respond –and it was at this moment my respect for Moses grew exponentially.

Chapter 13: Making Tough Decisions; Meeting Challenges – I think the title of this chapter speaks for itself.

Chapter 14: Balancing the Personal and the Professional: The ol’ work/life balance chapter.

Chapter 15: Leaders Struggle with Their Mortality – Coming to the harsh reality that eventually we have to let go of the reigns.

Chapter 16: Raising Up the Next Generation of Leaders – The importance of mentorship.

Last Thoughts

This book, although biblically based, is extremely practical. It is chock full of quotes and examples from CEOs and world leaders on how they handled situations. The book was so good (in my personal opinion) that half my book was highlighted by the time I was done due to the powerful thoughts, quotes, and tips. If you are a leader in any capacity, this is a must read. You are going to have a brand new appreciation for Moses by the time you finish reading this book, and it will change not only how you lead, but also your understanding of what leadership really is.



For more insights on Moses and his leadership journey, please watch the four part **‘Moses’s Trouble’** teaching series and then, take time to enjoy the two part teaching series called, **‘Moses’s Triumph’** series.



DISCLAIMER

The book reviews featured in this newsletter are submitted by members of the Shalom Macon Community. Please note that the books being reviewed have not been screened or vetted by the congregational leadership. As such, the views and opinions expressed in these reviews do not necessarily reflect those of Shalom Macon. We appreciate the contributions from our members and encourage diverse perspectives.



SENDING OUT OUR OWN

BOAZ HUCKEY IN ISRAEL

By Darren Huckey

In early May, Shalom Macon recognized Boaz Huckey as he was preparing to leave the next week for Israel. Our pride in this young man was palpable, and our prayers continue for him. Here is an inside look at his preparation and journey:

The Preparation

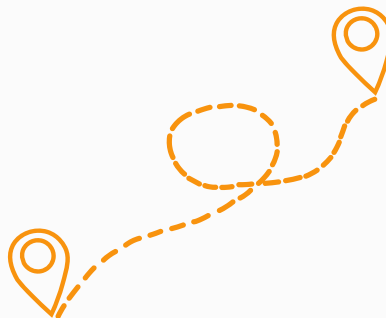
Since the onset of the Israel war with Hamas on October 7 of last year, our son, Boaz (age 19), has been chomping at the bit to get to Israel and help in some capacity. He's a fighter by instinct and has a soft spot in his heart to defend those who are being bullied or abused, especially when it comes to God's chosen people. Around November of last year, we started looking for a program for Boaz to get involved within Israel. The organization he decided upon was Sar-El. This is an IDF-led program that takes volunteers to help out on bases across Israel. The projects typically run for about three weeks at a time, but he wanted to stay longer so he was able to sign up for more than one project. The volunteers live on an IDF base Sunday through Thursday then are required to be off-site from Thursday afternoon until they report back the following Sunday morning. Their job is to help the IDF by doing whatever tasks need to be done on base, and they generally rotate to a different base each week. The tasks they are assigned could be anything from cleaning up and checking the useability of recently used gear to cleaning out a warehouse and building new shelves for it. Volunteers work alongside IDF members and other volunteers from around the world.

It took some time to go through the application process and get everything arranged to participate, but Boaz finally had a start date of Sunday, May 19, 2024. He flew out Wednesday, May 15, and arrived in Israel the following day. However, when he contacted Sar-El after he arrived in Israel, they did not have a record of his registration to the program that began on the 19th. They only showed his registration for the next program that began in June. After two days of going back and forth with Sar-El, they finally recognized that he was indeed registered, and he was set to report for duty early Sunday morning on the 19th. This was the beginning of a series of challenges that he would have, but also the first testimony of God's faithfulness to him during this journey.



His first weekend in Israel was a memory he will never forget. Through the connections we made via several members of our extended Shalom Macon family, we were able to find a family he could stay with his first weekend. It was a Messianic Israeli family, and one family member is in the IDF Special Forces—a perfect fit for Boaz. The following (Friday) morning he woke up early (2:45am) to leave with his host family and some others for an early morning trip to the Kinneret (Sea of Galilee). They went there to watch the sunrise, catch some fish, and celebrate *Dag BaOmer* together with a roasted fish breakfast on its shores. Can it get any better than that?

Sabrina and I would like to thank everyone who has been praying for Boaz and helped him to make this leap of faith. Boaz (which means “strength” in Hebrew) is not only physically strong, but he has courage and an unwavering determination to face adversity head-on without giving up. He has faced several challenges so far, and we are sure there will be many more to come. However, it is amazing to hear how God is using him. When he tells people he is not Jewish, most of them just sit there amazed and ask why he is there and how he is connected to Israel and the Jewish people. He has had many opportunities to explain how he was raised learning Torah and living a Torah-based life with Yeshua at the center. They are caught off guard and blown away by his story. The usual response is to run and find someone else so they can hear his story also. We are so proud of him and proud that he is representing not just our family, but Shalom Macon and our Master Yeshua as well. Every day he has been there, he has seen the faithfulness of God. Boaz will tell you of one such miracle in his article below.



The Journey

BOAZ HUCKEY

Most of you know me but if you don't, here is a quick introduction: My name is Boaz Huckey; I am the third son and middle child of Darren and Sabrina Huckey. I am 19 years old, a sophomore in college where I am majoring in exercise physiology, and I attend Shalom Macon. Currently I am in Israel traveling all over the country volunteering. The program I am currently volunteering with is called Sar-El. With Sar-El I work alongside the IDF on military bases doing whatever tasks they need. So far I have been to a base thirty minutes from Tel Aviv and a base eight minutes from the Egyptian border.

Every day here is a blessing. If you have never been to Israel, it is a feeling that is hard to describe. Every single day I get to wake up and work with soldiers—soldiers who have been through hell and back; soldiers who went through October 7th and yet can still laugh and smile throughout the day. These same soldiers, who watched their loved ones murdered, can turn to me and thank me out of the bottom of their hearts for loading up a few trucks and building some new shelves for them, acting like they themselves are not the most incredible heroes in the world! The incredibly kind yet fiercely unbreakable Israeli spirit is the most humbling thing I have personally ever seen.

I could go on and on about how amazing the people here are, but I want to tell a story about how good God has been to me throughout this process. On the weekends I have to go off base and travel to wherever I am going to stay. I have been truly blessed with multiple people hosting me in their homes.



“

Every single day I get to wake up and work with soldiers—soldiers who have been through hell and back; soldiers who went through October 7th and yet can still laugh and smile throughout the day.

— BOAZ HUCKEY

On the second weekend of Sar-El I needed to go from the train station near Tel Aviv to Tiberias (two hours away). Since I do not have a car, I use the very popular public transportation system in Israel. That seems rather simple, but there are a few small problems: #1 I don't speak Hebrew; #2 Everything is in Hebrew; #3 I DON'T SPEAK HEBREW; #4 My phone has no service. So with way too much determination and a haphazard plan, I got on a bus and headed towards Tiberias. I knew that I had to get off at a certain bus stop and then walk a little way to the lady's house I was staying at. So I got on the bus and sat next to a soldier who spoke no English (go back to problem #3) so with the few Hebrew words I knew I asked him which bus stop I was supposed to get off at. When the bus stopped at a particular stop I asked him if this was my stop. He responded with a very enthusiastic "KEN!" (Yes) while giving me two thumbs up. I knew he understood me because who gives someone two thumbs up and doesn't understand them?





“

God, I am still
dying. Please point
me in the right
direction.

— BOAZ HUCKEY

So I got off the bus with my backpack and two suitcases and started looking around. I was in the middle of nowhere. But I trusted my faithful guide and set out on a trek to find this lady’s house. I did not find her house. I was very, very lost. So I decided to learn from my mistake and find an English speaker. So I found an English speaker. They told me I was still twenty minutes from where I needed to be and then told me the name of the bus stop I needed to get off at. So, I hopped onto another bus. Twenty minutes go by and I hear the name of a bus stop similar to the one my English-speaking guide told me, but not exactly, so I tell myself I won’t be fooled again, and I stay on the bus... and miss my stop once again.

A few bus stops later I started to get concerned, so I asked the bus driver if we were approaching my bus stop. Without even turning his head he just jerked his thumb backward indicating that I had already missed my stop. So I got off at the next bus stop and started my trek once again with around 100 pounds of luggage in tow. After a solid thirty minutes of walking uphill, I found another English speaker.

I asked him for directions and he helped me! I was told that I just need to go four blocks then make a right and the house should be right there. After four blocks and a right turn, the house is in fact not there. So I stopped and prayed, “God please help me find this lady’s house. I am about to die!” After that simple little prayer, I saw a hotel. That’s when I remembered the lady had said her house was right by a hotel. With a heart full of hope I went into the hotel and asked if I could use their phone to call my host. They said yes and let me use their phone. She answered and I told her where I’m at. She said that her house is a five-minute walk from the hotel in the opposite direction that I had been going. Her directions went as follows: “Walk five minutes and when the houses on the right end, there should be a #5 on your right. Head down the stairs and I will meet you there.” So, with a grateful heart, I set out again. And I walked for a solid twenty minutes and the houses still had not ended on the right side.

Then I saw another hotel (this was the hotel the lady thought I was at in the first place). I put two and two together and realized I am now five minutes away from her house. In five minutes the houses stopped on the right side but there wasn’t a #5 anywhere to be seen. I kept walking, thinking maybe the houses hadn’t ended yet and there was just a break. My hope was starting to fail again so I prayed once more, “God, I am still dying. Please point me in the right direction.” As soon as those words escaped my lips an incredibly strong gust of wind hit me straight in the chest. I thought I was tweaking for a second so I jokingly said, “Do you want me to turn around?” Then another strong gust of wind hit me just like the first one. I didn’t know if it was my dehydrated mind making things up or what, but I decided to turn around. Right when I did, I saw the #5 address. It was covered by a tree branch that made it where I couldn’t see it when I was walking from the other direction.

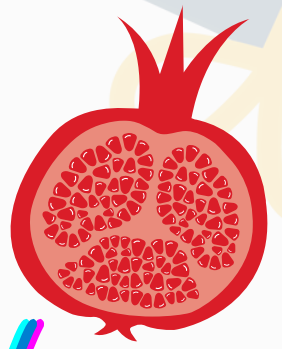
With all of that being said, I just wanted to give a small story of how truly amazing God is. He really does answer prayer when we are open to Him and listen. I hope that my little story can inspire you in some way—if it is to pray more, listen for God more, be open to what He has to say even if you think it is the opposite of what you should be doing, or whatever it may be. I hope that it positively impacts your life and gives you more faith in Him. *Shavuah Tov!*



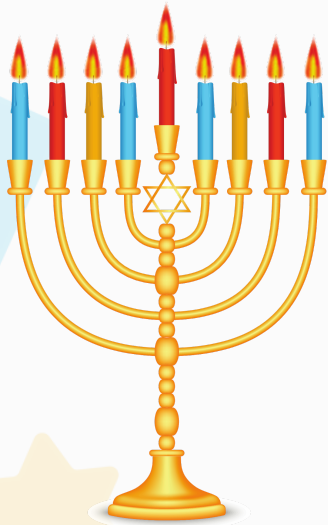
RETROSPECTIVE

A YEAR OF IN PICTURES

L'Chaim



Hannukah





Meal of Messiah

Dag bi'Omer





פורים שמחה



Purim





Camp Dorot

