

House of Covenant NEWSLETTER

August 2026



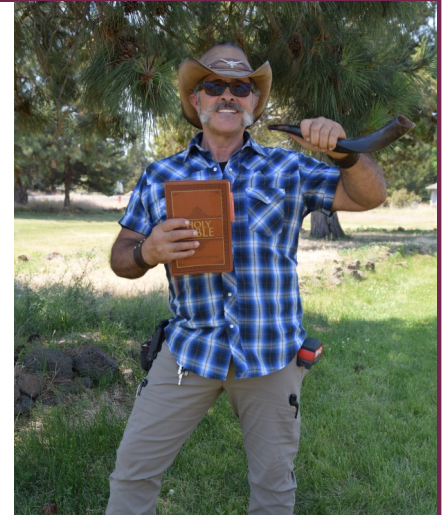
APPRECIATION - Johnny Oxendine

We would like to take a moment to recognize and sincerely thank **Johnny Oxendine** for his faithful and generous service to House of Covenant.

Recently, when the sprinkler pipes in the front yard of the Water Church (and House of Covenant) property needed attention, Johnny willingly and happily volunteered his time and skills to help fix the problem. His work was swift, and done with excellence. We are incredibly grateful for the time and effort he gave to care for our building.

But this is just one example of Johnny's servant heart. He is always ready to leap at an opportunity to lend a hand and help wherever he can, often doing the kind of work that happens quietly and behind the scenes. Many of us know Johnny by the joyful smile he brings to worship and by his evident love for the Lord. That same joy and love are reflected in the way he serves others.

Johnny, thank you for serving so faithfully, for giving your time so freely, and for being willing to help whenever there is a need. Your work may not always be seen by everyone, but it is deeply appreciated. We are blessed to have you as part of our House of Covenant community!



Shabbat School At A Glance *Written by Taylor Anderson*

Greetings Family and Friends of our Shabbat School Students!

As the Fall Feasts approach, it also marks a time of year for reflection and gratitude. The last couple years of Shabbat School have brought wonderful memories and moments with the kids watching them learn and grow, and it has been an incredible blessing to be a part of it. This year, we have been focusing more on topical teachings and each teacher has done a phenomenal job of bringing their gifts and talents to share with the kids for those lessons. The following is a brief list of some of those lessons: Armor of God, Psalm 23, The Lords Prayer, "I am" statements of Yeshua, Mother's Day, "God's Word is..." and many others. While each class is led by a rotation of our amazing teachers, we begin and end each class with the same things: Open class with snacks and fellowship and end class with a group blessing over the challah bread. These moments of fellowship are very special and allow for the children to share what's on their hearts, and also be a part of breaking bread together. Your children are amazing and getting to spend time with them during Shabbat School is such a joy. Thank you all so much for your support and encouragement as we continue to prepare for another year ahead!

Blessings, Shabbat School Leadership

RESOURCES

To view teachings online, search YouTube for [House Of Covenant In Bend Oregon](#).

For recommended books, resources, and study materials visit [lostintranslation.org](#).

Tithe online! Visit our website at [www.houseofcovenant.org](#).

WHERE TO FIND US

Phone: (458) 899-4922

Email: office.houseofcovenant@gmail.com

Website: www.houseofcovenant.org

We meet at:

21300 Bear Creek Rd.
Bend, OR 97701

Office hours:

Tuesday - Friday 10am - 6pm

Saturday 10am - 3pm

Sunday - Monday Closed

Mailing address:

House of Covenant
PO Box 8224
Bend, OR 97708

If you spend time getting to know Heidi & Garrett Hanger, you'll discover that there's a beautiful thread running through their story: divine appointments, unexpected turns, and evidence that God knows exactly where He is leading His children. God has intertwined their paths by bringing them together and planting them at House of Covenant.

A Journey to Something Deeper

For both Heidi and Garrett, their eventual journey to House of Covenant was shaped by a longstanding desire to explore their faith more deeply. Garrett was baptized at around age 7, and Heidi at age 12. She recounted that soon thereafter she heard God's voice for the first time and recalled an important lesson from the experience: He speaks to her and proves Himself faithful in the small moments, reminding her that He will be there for her in the significant ones as well. Heidi grew up attending Calvary Chapel in Bend. Although she hadn't been attending church regularly in her twenties, she eventually found herself longing to reconnect and study more. "I remember praying about it. I wanted to go back to that *strong* faith that I'd had growing up."

Garrett grew up as a Christian in Eugene, OR. When describing his childhood and faith during that time, he says, "I was steeped in it, and I saw that it was real." His grandmother was especially influential in his faith, continually pointing him toward the Hebrew roots of the Bible. She modeled a love for Yeshua that Garrett says was instrumental in keeping him grounded. During his senior year of high school, Garrett found himself struggling with an overwhelming sense of rage. When missionaries visited his campus, he listened to their stories and realized that if God could help them through what they had endured, He could help *him* too. That day, while they were praying with the missionaries, one of them stopped him, took him by the shoulders, and prayed that the spirit of rage would leave him, despite Garrett having told him nothing about what he was going through. He highlights that as a moment that changed the course of his life.

Garrett's journey to House of Covenant took him much farther from home first. As a young man, Garrett had the desire and conviction to travel to Israel. What began as an uncertain trip became an adventure filled with unexpected provision. His grandmother sponsored his trip, and he later found himself with a zeal to go back to Israel again. Through another unexpected connection, Garrett was able to fulfill his desire to go back to Israel by working on a kibbutz. While there, God carried him through dangerous circumstances and safely connected him with a Messianic congregation where he began to see Scripture through a new lens. When he returned to Oregon after his experience ended, he asked God, "Why am I here?" Looking back, we can see that God had a wonderful plan for Garrett. While he was back home in Oregon, he heard about a congregation that was similar to the one he had attended in Israel. While researching House of Covenant, he found out about Hebrew lessons held by Jodi Klein and decided to attend! When they began talking, she told him to bring a change of clothes to Saturday's service because some of the congregants would play frisbee afterward every week. Garrett took the plunge and attended both the service and frisbee games, where he made many lasting, meaningful friendships.

Before she met Garrett, Heidi often felt that something was missing from her experiences with church. After Garrett introduced her to House of Covenant at the beginning of their relationship, Heidi was drawn to the depth and richness of what she was learning: "It wasn't just about parables and salvation. It was reading through the Torah, the Hebrew perspective, why the feasts matter, and history!" Coming from a more traditional Christian background, she remembers feeling like an outsider at first. But as time passed, she became comfortable. After fasting and praying about being used by Him, she found herself dancing during worship for the first time, being asked to lead the service prayer, and repeatedly finding herself in the right place at the right time to meet someone else's needs. House of Covenant brought her a new conviction: "How can I change? How can I grow and show my faith through works, too?"



Friendship, Love, and A Community That Shows Up

About a year after Garrett joined the Saturday frisbee group, Heidi joined, too. As they spent more time together at sports and mutual events, Garrett discovered that he and Heidi shared many interests and hobbies. Their friendship eventually became something more. In 2019 came a rather memorable proposal. The night before Heidi was scheduled to leave for China to work as an English teacher, Garrett proposed. They wanted to tell their loved ones in person, so they managed to keep the engagement a secret until Heidi returned to the U.S. The two were married in 2020, though the journey to that day came with plenty of complications during the pandemic. Heidi's outlook on these difficult times is inspiring. "When things aren't going right, it's almost exciting to see how God's going to work it out in His plan." Garrett still laughs about the many complications surrounding one of his trips to Israel. At one point, his plane repeatedly turned around and landed, causing him to miss his connecting flight. What could have been merely frustrating ended up giving him an unexpected opportunity to spend the night with his dad in Phoenix, which he now knows was meant to be. He jokes that it felt a little like the story of Jonah and the whale, as though these delays were because he was supposed to do something different than planned. Heidi has developed a similar perspective. Rather than becoming discouraged when plans go wrong, she finds herself looking forward to seeing how God will work through them. Their shared love of songs like **"10,000 Reasons"** and **"Blessed Be His Name"** reflects that same posture of trust.

Garrett and Heidi both highlight that one of the greatest gifts they've found at House of Covenant is community. That became especially clear during Heidi's battle with cancer. She remembers congregants gathering with her before her first surgery and subsequent treatments. The support she received was deeply meaningful, particularly during a season when it could be difficult to remain positive. After her treatments were over, Heidi was finally able to sign up for the women's retreat. She tearfully described how surprised and deeply touched she was when people actually checked in with her to make sure she could attend. "I was like 'I'm wanted?'" During the Shabbat teaching by the river at the retreat, she remembers the water becoming overwhelmingly loud. She felt convicted that it was time to rededicate herself to Him. The experience brought together so many things God had been doing in her life: peace during her cancer journey, her desire for deeper relationships, and her longing to return to the childlike faith she had known when she was young. For years she'd been praying that their son, Gideon, would have some of the same experiences she had enjoyed growing up: space to play, catch lizards, and spend time in nature. While house-hunting, she and Garrett visited a property, and while they were still there, Garrett looked at her and said, "You've already moved in, haven't you?" This house became a lesson in patience, trust, and God's faithfulness. In the end, He provided a way for them to make the property their own. It was another reminder that God was answering prayers they'd carried for a long time.

Still Growing

Today, Heidi and Garrett continue to grow in their faith, their marriage, and their understanding of God's faithfulness. Heidi's journey has taught her that even difficult seasons can become places where God reveals His presence, answers prayers, and draws us back to Himself. Garrett's journey has taught him that God can make a way when the path seems impossible, sometimes through the most unexpected people and circumstances. Currently, God is working in Garrett's life by pushing him further outside of his comfort zone through his new role at work. Heidi has been asking God to use her more, and she's already seeing Him answer that prayer in unexpected ways. They feel called to help spread the peace and faith they've come to know "that can only be found through our God." Their story is ultimately one of returning, trusting, and discovering that God has been present all along. From childhood faith to seasons of wandering, from Israel and China to Oregon, from frisbee games to a secret engagement, and from difficult trials to a deeper sense of community, God has woven together two very different journeys. We are grateful for the ways their family continues to enrich this congregation with their presence, their faith, and their willingness to trust God wherever He leads.

Written by Juna Stosik

Welcome to Chai with the Rabbi, where we introduce biblical insights from a Hebraic perspective that draw us closer in covenant relationship with God.

Shalom Chaverim (Friends)!

One of the most common questions asked by skeptics and believers alike is simple: "Can the Bible be trusted?" It is a fair question.

Let's begin with the overall information. The entire Bible is comprised of 66 books, with approximately 40 authors and written over a 1500-year period, beginning in 1447 B.C. and finishing somewhere in the 90's A.D.

The Bible claims to record real people, real places, real kingdoms, real events, and most importantly, God's interaction with humanity throughout history. If those claims are false, then the Bible should be examined and treated as any other ancient document. If those claims are true, however, then the Bible deserves the most serious consideration.

Before discussing faith, it is worth examining the historical evidence. One of the strongest evidences for the reliability of Scripture is the sheer number of ancient manuscripts available to scholars.

Ancient Manuscripts

The following section is adapted from aish.com – Accuracy of Torah Text: <https://aish.com/48969731/>

The Torah was originally dictated from God to Moses, letter for letter. From there, the Midrash (Devarim Rabba 9:9) tells us:

"Before his death, Moses wrote 13 Torah Scrolls. Twelve of these were distributed to each of the 12 Tribes. The 13th was placed in the Ark of the Covenant (with the Tablets). If anyone would come and attempt to rewrite or falsify the Torah, the one in the Ark would 'testify' against him. (Likewise, if he had access to the scroll in the Ark and tried to falsify it, the distributed copies would 'testify' against him.)"

How were the new scrolls verified? An authentic "proof text" was always kept in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, against which all other scrolls would be checked. Following the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, the Sages would periodically perform global checks to weed out any scribal errors.

Writing a Torah Scroll

To eliminate any chance of human error, the Talmud enumerates more than 20 factors mandatory for a Torah scroll to be considered "kosher." This is the Torah's built-in security system. Should any one of these factors be lacking, it does not possess the sanctity of a Torah scroll, and is not to be used for a public Torah reading.

The meticulous process of hand-copying a scroll takes about 2,000 hours (a full-time job for one year). Throughout the centuries, Jewish scribes have adhered to the following guidelines:

- A Torah Scroll is disqualified if even a single letter is added.
- A Torah Scroll is disqualified if even a single letter is deleted.
- The scribe must be a learned, pious Jew, who has undergone special training and certification.
- All materials (parchment, ink, quill) must conform to strict specifications, and be prepared specifically for the purpose of writing a Torah Scroll.
- The scribe may not write even one letter into a Torah Scroll by heart. Rather, he must have a second, kosher scroll opened before him at all times.
- The scribe must pronounce every word out loud before copying it from the correct text.
- Every letter must have sufficient white space surrounding it. If one letter touched another in any spot, it invalidates the entire scroll.



- If a single letter was so marred that it cannot be read at all, or resembles another letter (whether the defect is in the writing, or is due to a hole, tear or smudge), this invalidates the entire scroll. Each letter must be sufficiently legible so that even an ordinary schoolchild could distinguish it from other, similar letters.
- The scribe must put precise space between words, so that one word will not look like two words, or two words look like one word.
- The scribe must not alter the design of the sections, and must conform to particular line-lengths and paragraph configurations.
- A Torah Scroll in which any mistake has been found, cannot be used, and must be fixed within 30 days, or buried.

Success of the System

Maintaining the accuracy of any document as ancient and as large as the Torah is very challenging even under the best of circumstances. But consider that throughout history, Jewish communities were subject to widespread persecutions and exile. Over the last 2,000 years, Jews have been spread to the four corners of the world, from Yemen to Poland, from Australia to Alaska.

Other historical factors make the accurate transmission of the Torah all the more difficult. For example, the destruction of the Temple 1,900 years ago saw the dissolution of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish central authority which traditionally would unify the Jewish people in case of any disagreements.

Let's investigate the facts as we have them today. If we collect the oldest Torah scrolls and compare them, we can see if any garbling exists, and if so, how much.

How many letters are there in the Torah? 304,805 letters (or approximately 79,000 words).

If you were to guess, how many letters of these 304,805 do you think are in question? (Most people guess anywhere from 25 to 1,000 letters.)

The fact is, that after all the trials and tribulations, communal dislocations and persecutions, only the Yemenite Torah scrolls contain any difference from the rest of world Jewry. A total of nine letter-differences are found in their scrolls.

These are all spelling differences. In no case do they change the meaning of the word. For example, how would you spell the word "color?" In America, it's spelled C-O-L-O-R. But in England, it's spelled with a "u," C-O-L-O-U-R.

Such is the nature of the few spelling differences between Torah scrolls today. The results over thousands of years are remarkable! – **End of aish.com quote.**

The Gospels and Epistles

Now let's detail the Brit Hadashah (the New Testament). The Brit Hadashah is one of the most well-attested documents of antiquity. Thousands of Greek manuscripts exist, along with thousands more in Latin, Syriac, Coptic, and other ancient languages. Portions of the New Testament can be dated remarkably close to the lifetime of the apostles, between 50 – 100 A.D.

By comparison, many classical works accepted as historically reliable survive in only a handful of manuscripts copied centuries after the originals.

The issue is not whether the New Testament was copied. Every ancient document was copied. The question is whether it was copied accurately.

Because of the vast number of surviving manuscripts, scholars can compare copies from different regions and periods. While minor spelling variations and copyist errors exist, the overwhelming message of the text remains remarkably stable.

The Dead Sea Scrolls

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 transformed biblical scholarship.

Prior to their discovery, the oldest complete Hebrew manuscripts dated to approximately the tenth century A.D. Critics often argued that centuries of copying must have significantly altered the biblical text.

The Dead Sea Scrolls pushed portions of the Hebrew Scriptures back more than one thousand years.

When scholars compared these ancient scrolls with later Hebrew manuscripts, they found extraordinary consistency. While minor variations existed, the overall message remained intact.

The scrolls demonstrated that Jewish scribes transmitted the Hebrew Scriptures with remarkable care and accuracy.

Archaeology and the Bible

Archaeology does not prove the existence of God. However, it can confirm whether the Bible accurately describes the world in which its events occurred.

Over the last two centuries, archaeological discoveries have repeatedly confirmed biblical people, places, customs, and events.

Examples include:

- The House of David inscription, which confirms the historical existence of King David.
- The Cyrus Cylinder, which parallels the biblical account of Cyrus allowing exiled peoples to return to their homelands.
- The Pool of Beit Chesed and Pool of Siloach, locations mentioned in the Gospels that were later discovered.
- The Pilate Stone, confirming the existence of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor who presided over Yeshua's trial.

Many critics once claimed such figures or locations were legendary. Archaeology often proved otherwise.

The Bible and Historical Detail

Unlike mythology, the Bible consistently roots its accounts in history.

The biblical authors frequently name:

- Kings
- Governors
- Cities
- Nations
- Dates
- Genealogies
- Political events

Luke's Gospel provides a powerful example. Luke opens his account by stating that he carefully investigated the events he recorded. He repeatedly anchors his narrative to rulers, locations, and historical circumstances.

This is not how myths are normally written.

The authors clearly expected their claims to be examined.

Fulfilled Prophecy

Another unique feature of Scripture is prophecy. The Hebrew Scriptures contain numerous prophecies concerning nations, kings, Israel, and the coming Messiah. Believers differ regarding the interpretation of specific prophecies. Nevertheless, the existence of predictive prophecy is one of the most distinctive characteristics of the Bible.

The prophet Isaiah described Cyrus by name approximately 150 years before the Persian ruler's birth. The prophets foretold Israel's exile, judgment, restoration, and return to the land.

Messianic believers also see numerous prophecies fulfilled in Yeshua, including His lineage, birthplace, suffering, rejection, and resurrection.

The Unified Story

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of Scripture is its unity. The Bible was written over approximately 1,500 years by dozens of authors from different backgrounds:

- Shepherds
- Kings
- Prophets
- Priests
- Fishermen
- Tax collectors
- Scholars

Yet from Genesis to Revelation, a consistent story emerges.

Creation.

Fall.

Redemption.

Restoration.

The central theme remains God's desire to dwell with humanity and restore what was broken through sin. This unity does not eliminate difficult passages or interpretive challenges. It does, however, present a coherent narrative unlike anything else in ancient literature.

Faith and Evidence

Historical evidence can demonstrate that the Bible deserves to be taken seriously. Archaeology can confirm places. Manuscripts can confirm transmission. History can confirm people and events. Yet evidence alone cannot create faith. At some point every person must answer the same question faced by Abraham:

Will I trust God?

The biblical faith is not blind faith. It is a faith grounded in evidence, history, experience, and God's faithfulness throughout generations.

Ultimately, the greatest testimony to the Bible's reliability is not merely that it has been accurately preserved, but that generation after generation it continues to transform the lives of those who trust the God who speaks through its pages.

The Scriptures are more than an ancient collection of historical documents. They are the unfolding story of God's covenant relationship with humanity. The evidence invites us to investigate. Faith invites us to enter into the story ourselves.

The historical reliability of the Bible answers whether we can trust the Scriptures.

Faith answers whether we will trust the God who gave them.

Shalom and God bless,

Rabbi Adam Spears

UPCOMING EVENTS

Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah) Service *Friday, September 11 at 6:30pm*

Join us for our Feast of Trumpets/Rosh Hashanah celebration. Rosh Hashanah (Hebrew: ראש השנה which translates to "head of the year"), is the Jewish New Year. It is the first of the High Holidays, or Yamim Noraim ("Days of Awe"), celebrated ten days before Yom Kippur. It is described in the Torah as יום תרועה Yom Teruah, Day of the Shofar Blast). These shofar blasts call us to gather/worship, to repentance, to war/battle, and to the return of the Messiah. This assembly fulfills the Leviticus 23:24 command to assemble on this day. **Join us at 6:30pm for our Feast of Trumpets celebration! There is a Oneg (potluck - Kosher foods only) at the beginning of service.**

Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) Service *Sunday, September 20 at 7pm*

We meet in the evening for this service. This is the time we wear white to show the reverent holiness of this appointed time of God. This day is also called the Shabbat of Shabbats (the sabbath of sabbaths). The Day of Atonement is the holiest day of the year in the Bible. Its central themes are atonement and repentance. The Jewish People traditionally observe this holy day with a 25-hour period of fasting and intensive prayer, often spending most of the day in synagogue services. Yom Kippur completes the annual period known in Judaism as the High Holy Days (or sometimes "the Days of Awe"). **Join us for our Yom Kippur service at 7:00pm.**

Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) Service *Friday, September 25 at 6:30pm*

Sukkot, or Feast of Tabernacles, marks the seventh festival of God's appointed times. This is a remembrance of the Hebrews dwelling in tents during their wanderings through the desert for forty years. It is a time of celebration and thanksgiving to God for dwelling in our midst. This is also the time Yeshua our Messiah was born into the world! **Join us for our Sukkot Service at 6:30pm. We will have Lulavs available for you!**

Shemini Atzeret / Simchat Torah Service *Saturday, October 3 at 10am*

Shabbat and Shemini Atzeret (שמיני עצרת "the Eighth [day] of Assembly") is a Jewish holiday. It is celebrated on the 22nd day of the Hebrew month of Tishrei (first month of calendar). In the Diaspora, an additional day is celebrated, the second day being separately referred to as Simchat Torah. In Israel, the holidays of Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah are combined into a single day and the names are used interchangeably. **Join our service and Oneg (potluck - Kosher foods only) at 10:00 a.m.**

All upcoming events and services are listed on our online calendar at houseofcovenant.org.

CLASSES AND GROUPS **All events meet at 21300 Bear Creek Rd unless noted.*

Davidic Dance Class

Mondays, 7pm

Darla Estes: 541-550-6750

Isaiah Study Group

Thursdays, 6:30pm

Sherel Stosik: 808-778-1172

Men's Group

On Break

Jeb Anderson: 541-316-3570

**Location to be determined*

FEATURED ITEM - 16-Month Biblical Calendar

Available on the Bookstore Counter for \$15.95

As the seasons begin to change and God's fall festivals draw near, it's the perfect time to align your schedule with His appointed times.

This beautifully designed Biblical calendar is now available, just in time for the **Feast of Trumpets (beginning the evening of September 11th)**. We've found this calendar to be an invaluable tool for planning ahead, preparing for God's appointed times, and keeping His biblical calendar at the center of our year. It's practical, beautiful, and a wonderful reminder of His rhythm and His faithfulness.

Pick up your copy at the bookstore counter today and prepare for the upcoming fall festivals with confidence!

