



Introduction / What Is “Messianic Judaism”?

I. Introduction

- a. Yeshua is not the Hebrew name for Jesus!—Paradigm Challengers
- b. One Messianic Jew’s Perspective
- c. Overview of the Messianic Jewish Movement Series
 - i. Who is the intended audience of this series
 1. Messianic Jewish believers in the Messiah Yeshua
 2. Gentile believers who have attached themselves to Jewish believers (“Messianic Gentiles” or modern-day *gerim*, “sojourners”)
 - ii. What will we be discussing?
 1. Scriptural, Historical, Contemporary and Prophetic views concerning the Messianic Jewish movement
 2. Topics that pertain to Messianic Jewish identity, and community/congregational and individual life
 - iii. In what context is this series to be discussed?
 1. In the context of Jewish and Gentile believers
 2. With diverse backgrounds and understandings of the Messianic Jewish movement
 - iv. At what point in Messianic history is this series being taught?
 1. A time when the Messianic Jewish movement is maturing,
 2. though still struggling with its identity
 - v. Why do we need to discuss the topics in this series?
 1. Unity of vision and purpose
 2. Preparation for the future
 - vi. What methods will we employ to accomplish the purpose of this series?
 1. Challenging paradigms
 2. Studying the Scriptures
 3. Relating personal experience and thoughts
 - vii. What we won’t be covering
 1. In-depth Jewish or Christian history or theology
 2. Extensive “Messianic Jewish” theology—we will boldly go under the assumption that the Messianic Jewish perspective of Scripture is correct, and that the burden of proving otherwise is on our critics.
 - viii. What we will be covering
 1. Topics that affect us as disciples of Messiah, on both individual and corporate levels
 2. Topics that have traditionally been controversial or have challenged preconceived Christian or Jewish ideas.

II. “Messianic Judaism”—Possible Definitions

- a. Various definitions of Messianic Judaism
 - i. A movement of people; committed Jews who believe in Yeshua
 - ii. A movement of Jewish congregations; committed to Yeshua; covenantal responsibility related to Torah; expressed in Jewish tradition
 - iii. Jewish people who believe in Jesus; it is a lifestyle; includes Jewish customs and traditions (heritage); part of the universal Body of Messiah
 - iv. Resurgence of a very old movement; authentic biblical Judaism
- b. What does “Messianic” commonly mean?
 - i. Messianic Jewish
 - ii. Hebraic or Jewish
 - iii. A “Jewish” alternative to “Christian”
 - iv. Could there be another meaning?
- c. What is “Judaism”?
 - i. According to the Jewish Encyclopedia
 - ii. “too large and comprehensive a force in history to be defined by a single term or encompassed from one point of view.”

III. In Simple Terms

- a. “Messianic”—one who is like Messiah
- b. “Judaism”—a traditional, movement, school, doctrine, principle, idea, theory, system or approach to Jewish religion
- c. Is the term “Messianic Judaism” beneficial or accurate?
 - i. Benefit—acceptance or identification with the Judaisms; law of return
 - ii. Personally, I can separate between religion and history/culture

IV. The Messianic Spectrum (Generalizations)

- a. Christianity
 - i. Replacement Theology - New/Spiritual Israel
 - ii. Antagonists toward the movement
 - iii. Friends of the movement
 - iv. Lovers of Israel
- b. Christian Believers
 - i. Christian Zionists
 - 1. Actively interested in getting Jews back to the Land of Israel
 - 2. Partly motivated by eschatological expectation
 - 3. Sharing the Good News with Jews is not primary (discouraged)
 - 4. Orgs: Bridges for Peace; Christians United For Israel (Hagee)
 - ii. Jews for Jesus
 - 1. One of the oldest missionary organizations dedicated to the evangelization of Jews
 - 2. Ambivalence toward placing new believers in a Messianic Jewish congregation versus a church; focus on getting Jews saved
 - iii. Hebrew/Jewish Christians
 - 1. Believers of Jewish lineage who identify primarily with a given denomination of Christianity, yet acknowledge their ethnicity
 - 2. Jewish identity is not incredibly important
 - 3. Orgs: Telchin, Fruchtenbaum (Ariel Ministries)

- iv. Jewish Roots Christians
 1. Seek to challenge authoritative church teachings
 2. Seek to “restore” Jewish (Hebraic) roots of Christianity and understanding of the Scriptures by consulting and considering historical and rabbinical sources
 3. Often a springboard into interest in the Messianic Jewish Movement
 4. Dwight Pryor (Center for Judaic Christian Studies); John Garr (Restoration Foundation)
- v. Road to Jerusalem—wait and see!
- c. One New Man
 - i. Emphasis on unity between Jews and Gentiles
 - ii. Often in a context that is a mix between Jewish and Christian practices
 - iii. The One New Man concept often enters into Messianic Jewish congregations
 - iv. Sid Roth, many “Messianic” congregations
- d. Jewish Believers / “Messianic Jews”
 - i. Of, for, to and by Jews
 - ii. Represented primarily in congregations consisting of both Jews and Gentiles, yet emphasizing Jewish ministry. Gentiles participate by assisting in Jewish ministry (of, for, to and by Jews)
 - iii. MJAA, UMJC
- e. Aberrant/Fringe Movements
 - i. Sacred Name
 1. Pronunciation of the tetragrammaton (YHWH) is necessary for salvation
 2. Antagonistic toward Jewish practice concerning the Name
 3. Distortion of Yeshua’s name (Yahshua, Yahushua, etc.)
 - ii. Ephraimite/Two House/”Messianic Israel”
 1. All Messianic Jews are “Judah,” all Messianic Gentiles are not gentiles (i.e. pagans), but are actually descendants of Ephraim (representing the 10 lost tribes) and therefore physically Israelites. (Ezekiel 37)
 2. Being a Gentile is bad, because Gentile means “pagan”
 3. Obsession with finding Jewish lineage, attributes newfound desire for Jewish things (Jewish roots) to being an actual physical Israelite
 4. Messianic Israel Alliance (MIA), Eddie Chumney
 - iii. Nazarene Judaism
 1. Seeks to restore 1st century Judaism—a return to the “pure faith” of the first century Nazarenes
 2. Seeks to define itself in opposition to the Church
 3. Likely denial of deity of Yeshua and inspiration of the NT
 4. SANJ (Society for Advancement of Nazarene Judaism)
 - iv. Universal Torah / “One Law”
 1. Torah-keeping is necessary for salvation (though this is vehemently denied)
 2. Not only is Torah keeping necessary for all believers, but for everyone in the world—it is the solution to all the world’s ills
 3. Replacement theology—Torah is not Jewish... there is “one law”

for Jews and Gentiles alike; comes from a misplacement of Torah's role and purpose (reformed theology, Calvinism)

4. First Fruits of Zion (FFOZ), Tim Hegg
- f. Judaism
 - i. Reformed, Conservative
 - ii. Orthodox
 1. Many believing Jews and Gentiles go so far past the extremes of the Messianic Jewish movement that they fall into Orthodox Judaism and deny Yeshua. The "One Law" movement, especially, leads to this.
 2. Despite its small number of adherents compared to all of world Jewry, Orthodox Judaism is seen as a true Judaism.
 - iii. Karaite
 1. Reject Oral Torah and authority of the Rabbis, and are therefore an attractive alternative to Orthodox
 2. There really is no significant representation of Karaites
 3. Michael Rood, Nehemiah Gordon

V. Conclusion

- a. The Messianic Jewish movement is hugely diverse, which makes self-definition and the pursuit of a clear vision very difficult.
- b. We need to endeavor to grow away from self-definition based on what we're not, but based on what the Scriptures encourage us to be.
- c. A movement of Jewish believers in Yeshua who maintain their identity as Jews is absolutely unique from all other related movements.
- d. Our challenge is to determine the purpose of such a movement. Can we do this by understanding ourselves in light of two very ancient and very opposite religions like Judaism and Christianity?
- e. We have to turn to the Scriptures as our sole, authoritative source for understanding who we are as individuals and collectively within Israel and the Body of Messiah.