



How Do We Relate to Judaism and Christianity?

I. Introduction

- a. Messianic Jews have an identity crisis
- b. In order to resolve this dual, schizophrenic nature, we need to ask, “How do we relate to Judaism and Christianity?”
- c. We will attempt to answer the following:
 - i. Do Messianic Jews merely form a sect of a previously existing religion?
 - ii. If so, which religion would that be—Judaism or Christianity?
 - iii. If not, how do Messianic Jews relate to these elder brothers?
 - iv. Is “Messianic Judaism” a synthesis of Judaism and Christianity?
- d. Necessary to lay an historical foundation

II. A Brief History from Creation up to the Second-Temple Period (1st Century)

- a. Adam to Moshe
 - i. Adam 4000 BC
 - ii. Noah (1700 yrs later) 2300 BC
 - iii. Tower of Babel / Dispersion of the Nations (100 yrs) 2200 BC
 - iv. Av’raham (300 yrs) 1900 BC
 - v. Jacob escapes famine to Egypt (200 yrs) 1700 BC
 - vi. Moshe (125 yrs) 1575 BC
 - vii. Deliverance from Egypt / Israel receives Torah (85 yrs) 1490 BC
 - viii. Israel enters the Land (40 yrs) 1450 BC
- b. Period of the Judges (50 yrs) 1400 - 1095 BC
- c. The Time of the Kings
 - i. Saul (300 yrs) 1095 BC
 - ii. David (40 yrs) 1055 BC
 - iii. Solomon (40 yrs) 1015 BC
 - iv. Dedication of first Temple (11 yrs) 1004 BC
- d. Kingdom of Israel divided (~30 yrs) 975 BC
 - i. North = “Israel”
 - ii. South = “Judah”
- e. Northern Kingdom conquered (Assyrians) (~250 yrs) 721 BC
 - i. 2Kings 17:14-16
 - ii. The northern kingdom’s captivity completed her assimilation into the nations and ended northern Israel’s history.
- f. **Captivity of Judah (Exile to Babylon)** (134 yrs) 587 BC
 - i. In less than 500 years after entering the Land, Israel became a divided nation.
 - ii. Within another 400 years, the Land was no longer possessed by Israel.
 - iii. Israel has been either an occupied nation or in dispersion for almost 3,000 years.
- g. Post Exile Judah
 - i. **Earliest known synagogues** during this period
 - ii. Judah begins return under Zerubbabel (52 yrs post-exile) 535 BC

- iii. Second Temple dedicated (70 yrs post-exile) 516 BC
- iv. Ezra/Nehemiah, Rebuilding Jerusalem (~60-70 yrs) ~450 BC
- v. **The Great Assembly** (Traditional)—was there a causal relationship between the Exile and the development of a new religion?
- vi. Conquest of Alexander the Great (200 yrs since Temple) 330 BC
 - 1. Hellenization (immersion in Greek culture) of the Jewish people
 - 2. Creation of the Septuagint (LXX)
- vii. Septuagint (Greek translation of Hebrew Scriptures) 250 BC
- viii. Antiochus Epiphanies (Chanukah story) 168 BC
 - 1. Temple rededicated in 165 BC
 - 2. Followed by 200 years of psuedo-kings in Judea
- ix. Probably earliest **development of the Second Temple Sects**
 - 1. Pharisees—Torah is fluid; proponents of Oral Law
 - 2. Sadducees—Torah is fixed; opponents of Oral Law
 - 3. Essenes—rejected authority of Second Temple and priesthood
- x. Roman occupation 63 BC
- xi. Herod the Great, King of Judah 37 BC
- xii. **Birth of Yeshua** 4 BC

III. Second Temple Period through Third century (200 years)

- a. Yeshua’s ministry begins ~26-27 AD/CE
- b. Yeshua’s death, burial, resurrection and ascension ~30 AD/CE
 - i. Nazarenes, “the Way”
 - ii. Gentiles accepted into the Household of God / Body of Messiah
 - iii. Earliest stages of Replacement Theology (Romans 11)
- c. **First Jewish Revolt Begins**—the “Zealots” (~36 yrs) 66 CE
- d. The Nazarenes flee to the city Pella (Luke 21:20-21), regarded as traitors
- e. **Jerusalem and Temple destroyed** 70 CE
 - i. Effectively ends the Sadducee, Essene and Zealot sects
 - ii. Only the Pharisees and Nazarenes remain
- f. **2nd Pope of the Roman Church** ~78 CE
- g. Birkat-HaMinim in synagogue liturgy 90 CE
- h. **Second Jewish Revolt** 135 CE
 - i. Simon Bar Kochva, military leader
 - ii. Rabbi Avika declared Bar Kochva to be Messiah
 - iii. End of the Nazarenes’ tenuous relationship with the Jewish community
- i. Gentile believers sever from all things Jewish ~160 CE
- j. Within 150 years of Yeshua’s earthly ministry, Jews and Christians had developed two entirely separate and distinct religions, leaving Messianic Jews without a home in either camp.
- k. By the third century
 - i. Hebrew Scriptures canonized
 - ii. Jewish believers largely outnumbered by Gentiles
- l. Through the third century
 - i. Jews tolerated by Rome
 - ii. Christian persecution by Rome

IV. Fourth Century to Present (1700 years)

Christianity	Judaism	
	Most Jews dispersed; Nazarenes essentially cease to exist	300 CE
Constantine; “religious tolerance”		313 CE
	Tolerance of Jews declines	
Christianity official religion of Rome		(17 yrs) 330 CE
	Jews convert to avoid persecution.	
New Testament Canonized		(45 yrs) 375 CE
Anti-Semitism from Church Fathers, hatred for Jews		(12 yrs) 387 CE
	Jews considered heretical	(~50 yrs) 438 CE
	Canonization of Talmuds (Jerusalem and Babylonian)	~500 CE
Attempt to unite Spain under Catholicism	Forced conversion of Jews in Spain—upon pain of death	~600 CE
Attempt to convert Jews to Christianity		
Roman Church (West) and Church at Constantinople (East) finally split		(~450 yrs) 1054 CE
Roman Catholic Church begins holy wars		
1st Crusade	Widespread massacre of Jews	1096 CE
2nd Crusade	Widespread massacre of Jews	(50 yrs) 1146 CE
3rd Crusade	Widespread massacre of Jews	(43 yrs) 1189 CE
Confiscation and burning of copied of the Talmud (Pope Gregory IX)		(55 yrs) 1244 CE
	Expulsion from England	(46 yrs) 1290 CE
	Expulsion from France	(58 yrs) 1348 CE
Gutenberg Bible—first complete moveable type Bible—Latin		(~100 yrs) 1455 CE
	Spanish Inquisition	(45 yrs) 1490 CE
	Expelled from Spain	1492 CE
Protestant Reformation		(25 yrs) ~1517 CE
Anti-Semitism from Martin Luther	Jews begin to prosper, but remain despised by the Reformers	(26 yrs) 1543 CE
King James Bible		1611 CE
Rapid expansion	Widespread dispersion, increased secularization	16th - 17th Centuries
Colonization, missionary activity	Distrust, persecution; Russian Pogroms; Birth of Conservative and Reform Judaism	18th - 19th Centuries
Further denominationalism, continued supersessionism; emergence of Christian Zionism	Ghettoization; Holocaust; Zionism; Israeli statehood in 1948	20th Century
During the 20th Century, Hebrew Christian alliances; Reemergence of Messianic Jews; Growing interest in end-times prophecy, Jesus movement revival		

V. Answering the Questions

- a. Do Messianic Jews form a sect of Judaism?
 - i. Possibly
 - ii. But do we identify with a religion (i.e. Judaism) or a people?
- b. Do Messianic Jews form a sect of Christianity?
 - i. It depends on who you ask
 - ii. For many Messianic Jews, we can consider ourselves part of the Body of Messiah (along with Gentile Christians) without worshipping in a Christian context
- c. Do Messianic Jews form a sect of a previously existing religion?
 - i. As Jews we can choose to clearly identify with the Jewish religions and define ourselves as opposed to certain Jewish beliefs and thereby call ourselves a sect of Judaism
 - ii. As Messianics, we can choose to clearly identify with the Christian religions and define ourselves as opposed to certain Christian beliefs and thereby call ourselves a sect of Christianity.
 - iii. My personal opinion: the modern Messianic Jewish movement does not form a sect of Judaism or Christianity by default. Because we have a dual history, we are also, in a very real sense, without a history. While I don't believe it should be our goal to seek to be a sect within a larger religion, we should not deny our connection and history with them either.
- d. How do Messianic Jews relate to their elder brothers?
 - i. We can agree with Christianity to a point, yet we are forced to distance ourselves from it as well (not from the people, from the religion)
 - ii. Judaism is intertwined with the identity of a people, yet the doctrines of the Judaisms reject Yeshua as Messiah.
 - iii. Neither religion bears much resemblance to the faith of the Scriptures

VI. Conclusion

- a. Judaism and Christianity are foreign to each other.
- b. The Messianic Jewish movement should be a Jewish movement of Messianic believers—Jewish, not Christian, and Messianic, not “Judaismish”. I do not believe our identity as Messianic Jews will be found as a sect within or combining two diametrically opposed religions. Therefore, I believe we as Messianic Jews should
 - i. Not seek to be another Judaism
 - ii. Not seek to be a new Christianity
 - iii. Nor desire to be a hybrid of both, making us representatives of neither
- c. The Messianic Jewish movement is a prophetic restoration movement—not to restore first century Nazarene Judaism, not to restore Christianity to its Jewish roots, and not to restore the bond between Jews and Christians—but to be the firstfruits restoration of the Jewish people to God... to be the first recognizable remnant of Jewish people in nearly 2,000 years to call Yeshua our Messiah, and to facilitate the return of all our Jewish people from the nearly 3,000 years of covenantal unfaithfulness.