

The next big step for the community of believers in my opinion is to seal the rift between messianic Jews and “Christians”¹. The first believers in Y’shua Ha’Mashiach (Jesus Christ) were Jews, indeed messianic Jews by definition. Amongst other things, at least a significant part of this sect was called the “Nazarenes”, believers in Y’shua the נוֹצְרִי (nōṣrī), i.e. Jesus from Nazareth. Then progressively, Christians became anti-zionist / anti-semitist and split their worship off from the Jewish traditions, and absorbed various pagan rituals and concepts on becoming “state church”.

Many of our current “Christian” practices and rituals must appear irreverent, paradox or outright weird to the Jewish community. Yet our Lord and leader was a thoroughly Jewish Rabbi. Before Easter I had the profound pleasure of partaking in a Passover Seder by “Jews for Jesus” at my local church, and was struck by the depth of meaning and rich symbolism in pretty much every aspect and detail of the feast. The last supper was of course a Passover Seder. The “bread” he broke was the Afikoman matzah, which has earlier been broken and hidden to re-appear at the end. The third cup raised after the meal is called the Cup of Redemption. This is what Y’shua raised when he said “this is my blood.”

Part of the Passover celebration is to rid the house of all leaven. So what will (messianic) Jews with their exceedingly symbolism-rich heritage think of Christians breaking leavened bread during their communion? With leaven signifying sin and impurity, how would this not be offensive? Yet we gentile Christians don’t even seem to realise. It is time that we as gentile and Jewish believers approach each other with tact, sensitivity and appreciation. Nothing is impure or wrong in and of itself (Col 2:16) but cultural roots can form barriers to reconciliation. And the Jewish cultural heritage is not a backdrop to Y’shua’s new covenant, it is its immediate context and the new covenant is embedded in the Jewish feasts.

Many prophecies, including the prophetic feasts of the Tanakh (the “Old Testament”²) have a dual fulfilment, for the Jewish people as a collective and Y’shua as an individual. His first coming fulfilled the spring feasts. It is compelling to expect that His second coming will fulfil the fall/autumn feasts, and

the prophetic clues therein may give valuable guidance to the relative timing and character of the end of the world as we know it, the secret³ (the event also awkwardly called “rapture”) and Y’shua’s second coming.

Every religion being practised over centuries in the world risks getting polluted with worldly influences and heresies. As already mentioned, Christianity as accepted various pagan influences, e.g. winter solstice, Easter, indulgences, purgatory, hell as an eternal torture... Judaism is not immune either, with mystic/esoteric streams like the Kabbalah. Y’shua Himself mocked the Pharisees by using their Talmudic traditions (oral at the time) in the tale of the rich man and Lazarus (sometimes called a “parable” though it is set apart from all other of Y’shua’s parables by some distinct characteristics). Abraham’s bosom or fire torture where souls roam restlessly and yearn for a drop of water - that is Talmudic and not from the Bible (Torah).

So to me the only way to grow back together is for both Jews and Christians to drop their defences and recognise each other’s mind sets and convictions without judgement, yearning eagerly to discover what common journey to glory the creator of all things has in store for us. The book of Ruth could be a good guide, which besides being an historical report also serves as an allegory with:

- Boaz representing the Father
- Obed standing for Y’shua (only pointing to Him toward the very end)
- Naomi standing for unrestored Israel
- Ruth representing the gentiles coming to faith, to the Lord, and
- The harvest being the harvest of souls.

Naomi’s heart softens through Ruth bringing her (Naomi) from Boaz extra grain from the harvest. The Christian church is due to turn from a “ruth-less” church to a “ruth-like” church⁴ – devoting itself to Israel and the common mission of Jews and Christians. As already touched on, this will involve bridging several elements of separation, including simple practical ones: Paul had no idea we would centuries later divide his train of thought in to chapters like 11 and 12!

¹ The term “Christian”/“Christians” appears only three times in the entire Bible (Acts 11:26, 26:28 and 1 Peter 4:16), and “Because of its common misuse we could profitably dispense with it” (John R. W. Stott, “In Christ”, an overall excellent article)

² The term “Old Testament” was coined by **Marcion of Sinope**, a rabid anti-Semitist rejecting the deity described in the Hebrew Scriptures

³ See Revelation/Unveiling 10:7 in a reliable translation e.g. the **concordant version**.

⁴ “**the Ruth-less church**” and Living Stones TV series (now defunct)