

Hebrews 13:10-13

The contrast here is between believers and non-believers. Specifically, those Jews who insist on continuing on under the Mosaic Covenant, rejecting the better sacrifice of the Messiah, cannot come to the altar which believers approach. The altar is not the Lord's Table, or the Catholic Mass, but used to show that those who have "fled" (Hebrews 6:18-19) to Jesus have access to God in contrast to those who don't have access to God.

The writer of Hebrews is concluding his appeal that these professing Jewish believers, and all who embrace the Old Covenant, can not be saved unless they come to the Messiah for salvation. To hold onto the Mosaic Covenant is to reject the sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ. Many religions of our world today do the same type of thing.

The writer exhorts those who are possessing believers to leave the Old Covenant ways, as well as the Rabbinical teachings, and embrace Jesus, willing to suffer the reproach.

10 **We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.**

Only believers have a right to come to this altar.

right - Kenneth Wuest says, "It is a technical term used in the law courts, of a legal right."

It is also used in John 1:12

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power [right] to become the sons of God, *even to them that believe on his name:*"

11 **For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.**

The writer of Hebrews reminds these Jewish believers through the Day of Atonement offering that the animals offered that day were not used for food and the bodies were taken outside the camp of Israel and burned.

12 **Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.**

13 **Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.**

Jesus suffered "without [outside] the gate." His people and it's priesthood rejected Him.

John 19:20 "...for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city."

This exhortation is to true Jewish believers and the need for them to wholly follow Jesus not holding onto the old ways (the Mosaic Law and it's practices).

Jewish believers are commanded to come "**out of the camp**" and "**unto him,**" "**bearing his reproach**" as He "**suffered without the gate.**" The camp has to be the practice of Judaism. Unto him must speak of the body of Messiah, or what is called the church.

"For the Jews to whom Hebrews was written, separation from the world's system meant separation from Judaism. Whatever significance and importance the Old Covenant and traditional ceremonies, regulations, and standards of Judaism once had, they are now invalid. God now does his work completely outside the camp of Judaism." John MacArthur, Hebrews page 381

"Jerusalem was the center of the apostate Judaism that crucified its Messiah and continued the temple sacrifices in defiance of God's plainly revealed will (9:8). When the Jew would leave the temple sacrifices in order to place his faith in their fulfilment, the crucified, risen Messiah, he would necessarily be separated, thus, set apart from that Judaism which he had formerly espoused. The word "sanctify" in the Greek means "to set apart for God." Thus, our Lord by becoming a sacrifice under the jurisdiction of the New Testament and as an outcast from Israel, set apart from the First Testament, and Israel, the Jew who placed his faith in Him, and consecrated that person to God. It was with His own blood He did this."

"The writer now exhorts his first-century readers to leave apostate Judaism and the temple sacrifices, and placing their faith in the Messiah as High Priest, bear His reproach, the reproach of exclusion from the Jewish commonwealth. This exhortation was addressed, of course, to those Jews who, while they had outwardly left the temple, yet had not placed their faith in Messiah, and were in danger of going back to the sacrifices." Kenneth Wuest, Hebrews, page 141

Today's Messianic Judaism movement, in many ways, is contrary to these commands.

Definition of Messianic Judaism

Dr. Richard Nichol, leader of Ruach Israel Congregation in Needham, MA defines this movement as, "...a(n) expression of Jewish faith built upon the essential truth that Jewish people who embrace the risen Messiah of Israel, Yeshua, are obliged to partner with God in securing the ongoing existence and vitality of the Jewish people worldwide, while simultaneously upholding Yeshua's message of love and redemption for the entire world."

Nichol, Richard, *Messianic Jewish Life*, "Messianic Judaism - So What Exactly Is It?", July-Sept. 1999, Vol. LXXII, No. 3, page 9.

The Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations at their 23rd Annual UMJC Conference on July 31, 2002 defines it as, "...a movement of Jewish congregations and congregation-like groupings committed to Yeshua the Messiah that embrace the covenantal responsibility of Jewish life and identity rooted in Torah, expressed in tradition, renewed and applied in the context of the New Covenant."

From the statement affirmed by the *Delegates to the 23rd Annual UMJC Conference on July 31, 2002*. Taken from the UMJC website, http://umjc.org/newsite/faq/mj_def.htm

"Present day Messianic Jewish congregations are made up of both Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus who have rejected historic Christian congregational expressions as being 'Gentile.' They have chosen to express their religious identity and corporate worship in a more genuinely Jewish style. Thus may include Hebrew liturgy and prayers, 'Israeli-style' hymnody and dance, the celebration of Jewish festivals, Sabbath observance, and in some cases, strict adherence to the 613 commandments of the Mosaic Law."

Jeffrey S. Wasserman, *Messianic Jewish Congregations: Who Sold this Business to the Gentiles?*, page 3

History of Messianic Judaism

"In America, the movement evolved from what was originally known as 'Hebrew Christianity' into today's 'Messianic Jewish Movement'. This process was hotly contested by the earlier American Hebrew Christians, who immigrated from Europe and most of whom died by the middle of the 20th century. It was also strenuously opposed by the British Hebrew Christians until 1975. The old guard of American Hebrew Christians were largely fundamentalist Christians of Jewish origin who were very conscious of their Jewishness, avidly supported the Zionist Movement, were active in their opposition to anti-Semitism and eagerly sought to promote the gospel within the nation of Israel. But most of them saw no room for what is now the Messianic Movement." *Judaism is Not Jewish*, Baruch Maoz, page 321

"These men [Maurice Rubens, Sabbati Rohold]...founded the Hebrew Christian Alliance in America (HCAA) in 1915. Rohold was elected to serve as the Alliance's first president. The Alliance was to serve as a fellowship of Jewish believers who worshiped in their various Christian churches. Heated discussions as to the wisdom, biblical grounds and feasibility of establishing distinctly Hebrew Christian congregations were held, and the idea was firmly rejected."

Judaism is Not Jewish, Baruch Maoz, page 322

In 1971 Martin Chernoff became the president of the HCAA and led the move toward the acceptance of rabbinic tradition.

The present day Messianic Judaism movement has its origins in the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America which was established in 1915. James Hutchens writes, "The origin of this movement must be seen as an outgrowth of the old Hebrew Christian movement in the United States. If one wishes to pinpoint the substantive beginnings of Messianic Judaism per se, I would suggest the biennial meeting of the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America held in Bradenton, Florida, in the summer of 1973. There a concerted effort was made by the 'young turks' of the Alliance to have the name changed from Hebrew Christian Alliance of America to the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America. While the actual name change did not take place until the Alliance met in the summer of 1975, the 1973 attempt reflected a growing desire on the part of many Jewish believers to have their identity as Jews remain intact once they became believers." *Missiology, An International Review, Messianic Judaism: A Progress Report, Vol. V, No. 3, July 1977*.

In 1975 Phil Goble, a Gentile believer, published a manual titled "*Everything You Need to Grow a Messianic Synagogue*." American Board of Missions to the Jews, now Chosen People Ministries, reviewed the manual in *The Chosen People* magazine of January 1976 and in the magazine attributed the beginning of Messianic Synagogues to Phil Goble. *The Chosen People Magazine*, "Messianic Synagogues Commentary," Vol. LXXXI No. 5, page 14, January 1976

DOCTRINAL ERRORS

"One of the major challenges before us is that some highly intelligent, sincere and well-intentioned teaching members of the *mishpochah* are developing a theology that to us seems to be straying from Scripture, a theology which would set us against one another. They do not represent the majority of people in any one messianic organization, but their influence is being felt in various organizations and congregations."

The Challenge of Our Messianic Movement - Part 2", Rich Robinson and Ruth Rosen

1. SYNCRETISM

Many in the Messianic Judaism movement see the "Jewishness" of Jewish believers as seemingly more important than our identity as followers of the Messiah or Christians. The emphasis on being Jewish usually takes the form of adopting worship practices more closely aligned with the rabbinic world than the Bible believing church.

One would think that the unbiblical syncretism of these practices with New Testament truth would be obvious to the leaders of this movement. Seemingly, it is not. The wearing of kippahs (head coverings), bar and bas mitzvahs, the present day festivals of Israel such as Yom Kippur and Passover, and a host of other practices are all rooted in rabbinic Judaism and not the Bible. The focal point of a believer's life should be Jesus not his cultural background and certainly not a religious practice that embraces a system in opposition to biblical truth and the Messiahship of Jesus. Certain religious cultural practices of Jewish people might be beneficial as a teaching tool but not as a worship model for a congregation. As Paul said,

"Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." (Philippians 3:8-9).

A Jewish believer's main identity should not be his Jewishness, but his relationship with Christ. The desire to be Jewish, and, in many instances be accepted as part of the Jewish community can lead to compromises that can ultimately reject some of the basic foundational doctrines of the Christian faith.

2. "REBUILDING" OF THE MIDDLE WALL OF PARTITION

Ephesians 2:14-15 tells of the new work God has done in Christ.

"For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace."

Jew and Gentile are now one in Christ. He has abolished the ordinances of the Mosaic Law.

The clear teaching of the above has not prevented the establishing of Messianic congregations and practices derived from the Law (and mixed with rabbinical practices) in those congregations today. Oftentimes the result is a cultural superiority over the rest of the body of Christ. Any pride is an affront to God, including cultural pride. We are all equal in our standing in Jesus whether Jew or Gentile, man or woman, free or slave.

Messianic Judaism, either overtly or subtly, is denying this truth. Robinson and Rosen comment,

"Mark Kinzer is the executive director of Messianic Jewish Theological Institute, which trains many of our up-and-coming messianic leaders. He also is the spiritual leader of Congregation Zera Avraham, a Messianic Jewish congregation in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and he is the author of a recently published booklet titled 'The Nature of Messianic Judaism: Judaism as Genus, Messianic as Species.' The very title of his booklet sets forth a troubling programmatic statement. For those who are trying to remember their biology, the genus is the larger division, made up of smaller, related species. The title of Kinzer's booklet essentially reverses the place that following Jesus is to occupy in our lives. That is not to say that Kinzer does not love and follow Y'shua. But we cannot downplay the ramifications of his statement that being a follower of Jesus is a sub-division of being Jewish. 'The fact that Jewish tradition has rejected the claim of Yeshua's Messiahship does not preclude Messianic Jewish identification with that tradition, even to the point where the Jewish people and Judaism (always interpreted through a Messianic lens) serve as the primary locus of social identity.'"

"As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Galatians 6:12-14.

Let us not put up barriers that hinder a person's walk with the Lord. When the focus of a believer's life is anything but Jesus, this is sin and detrimental to the spiritual health of the individual. God has called believers, Jew and Gentile, to a new relationship focused on the Messiah. We are to worship together around the word of God. To separate Jewish believers in a congregation based on ordinances that are at best done away with in Christ, and at worst are the institutions of Christ denying Rabbis is a sin against our Messiah, detrimental to the health of local congregations that need Jewish believers, and spiritually hurting many individuals.

3. DEITY OF CHRIST

Unfortunately, the deity of Christ is an issue in some Messianic circles. It is a problem in some churches in Israel and a Messianic congregation in the San Diego area split when some in the congregation denied the deity of Jesus.

An example of doctrinal compromise is the statement of faith of *Tree of Life Messianic Congregation* in San Diego is their statement of faith. There is no clear statement of belief concerning the Trinity, deity of Christ, and the virgin birth.

"We believe that the G-d of Israel is the one and only G-d, and the Creator and Redeemer of all things. Therefore, we strive to dedicate our lives to His worship and service."

"We believe that in the fulness of time, G-d sent His Son Yeshua (Jesus) into the world to redeem us from the curses, which we incurred through our own disobedience and that of our ancestors. Yeshua entered our world by miraculous birth, lived, a perfectly obedient life, and gave Himself as the unblemished sacrifice for our sins, surrendering to death at the hands of the Roman authorities. G-d raised Him from the dead according to the words of the prophets, and received Him back into His heavenly home, where he is now seated at G-d's own right hand. Therefore, it is our privilege to proclaim forgiveness and life through His name, and to honor Him in all that we do."

In *Tree of Life's Shalom and welcome to Tree of Life...* introduction paper given to visitors it states:

"Terms like *Christ, Christian, unsaved Jew, convert, baptize, trinity*, and *cross* conjure up in most Jewish minds images of pogroms, inquisitions, crusades, holocaust, assimilation, or spiritual genocide. It often leaves our Jewish people with a distorted view of who Yeshua really is, and presents Him as some sort of alien, pagan mythological deity. These terms are not a part of our vocabulary. **We are an authentic Jewish community that sets the record straight concerning the Jewish Messiah.**" (Emphasis in original)

4. SALVATION

"Recently [July, 2003], a delegation from the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (UMJC) held a conference in Israel. In the course of their visit, they gave a generous donation to a secular Jewish organization, which caught the attention of the media. Two delegates were asked by (an admittedly hostile) reporter for the *Jerusalem Post* newspaper. 'So, are Jews who don't believe in Jesus doomed to hell?' The delegate responded, 'No, absolutely not,' and as a result, the article reported, 'He [Rich Nichol] said that the UMJC...does not believe that Jews who have not accepted Jesus as the Messiah are doomed to hell.'

Mark Kinzer replied to Robinson's and Rosen's article in October, 2003 in *Havurah*, "The Challenge of Our Messianic Movement," part 2 by writing in part:

"I am also quoted as saying the following: **"Because of the validity of the Abrahamic covenant, I believe it's still as possible for a Jew who doesn't know Yeshua to have a living relationship with God, just as a Christian."** Robinson and Rosen conclude that my statement "is clearly an example of two-covenant theology, which says that Jews already have a covenant with God through Abraham and so do not need Jesus in order to find salvation" (6). **Admittedly, such a statement could be an example of dual covenant theology, but it is not "clearly so."** And, in the mouth of a Messianic Jewish leader, one can safely assume that there is probably a different way of construing the remark. Dual covenant theology holds that Jews and Christians have two distinct and equally valid paths to God: Christians come to God through the covenant established by Yeshua's sacrifice, whereas the relationship of Jews to God is through God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants. I do not know of any Messianic Jews who believe in dual covenant theology, for this theological framework has no place for Messianic Judaism. Despite raising the specter of "dual covenant theology," it appears that Robinson and Rosen also recognize that I do not embrace such a position, for they proceed to summarize my view as the belief that "God has already accepted them [i.e., non-Messianic Jews] in Y'shua."

"I do believe that the Abrahamic covenant offers Jewish people access to God in and through Yeshua. That does not mean that all Jews, by virtue of being Jews, have a right relationship with God. It does mean that God's favor still rests upon Israel, and He makes a way for humble and faithful members of His people to enter His presence through the unrecognized mediation of Israel's Messiah." [bold added]

Rich Nichol, Messianic Rabbi of Congregation Ruach Israel in Needham, Mass., past president of the UMJC and vice president of the International Messianic Jewish Alliance in a letter to Bob Mendelsohn, leader of Jews For Jesus Australia branch, says:

"The message I hear from the Jewish missions groups is very different [from my message]: All Jews are lost and hell-bound except for the tiny minority who believe in Jesus." And "I surely do not deny the realities of either eternal bliss for the righteous or judgment for the wicked. But I feel far less certain as to exactly who goes where than I did in an earlier stage of my spiritual journey."

Quoted from "The Challenge of Our Messianic Movement," part 2

"A recent Yale University thesis, written by a Jewish believer, on the UMJC and the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (MJAA) included some disturbing quotes from Tony Eaton, UMJC treasurer and Messianic Rabbi of Simchat Yisrael Messianic Congregation, and from Mark Kinzer. Eaton is quoted as saying,

"If Abraham Heschel is not in heaven, I don't belong there either, regardless of what I think about Jesus. This is a person who had a deep personal connection with God....The day is going to come in the judgment when all these devout Jews are going to come before the Messiah, and when they approach him they're going to look at him and say, 'Didn't I know you?' and he'll say, 'Yeah, you did, you just didn't know my name.'"

"Also, says Eaton, 'The Talmud says all Israel has a place in the world to come because God made a covenant with our ancestors. It's not an obsession for Jews to worry about post-mortem bliss. That's an obsession with evangelical Christians.... The focus on redemption and salvation in the Christian world is wrong—God's role is primarily as a consummator, bringing creation to completion. Redemption is there, but it's not the focus.'"

Quoted from "The Challenge of Our Messianic Movement," part 2

5. ECUMENICAL

Many of the leaders of Messianic Judaism are very ecumenical in their practice. In 2002 a booklet was written by Peter Hocken titled "Toward Jerusalem Council II: The Vision and the Story." *Toward Jerusalem Council II* is defined in its vision statement as "an initiative of repentance and reconciliation between the Jewish and Gentile segments of the Church. The vision is that one day there will be a second council of Jerusalem that will be, in an important respect, the inverse of the First Council described in Acts 15. Whereas the First Council was made up of Jewish believers in Yeshua (Jesus), who decided not to impose on the Gentiles the requirements of the Jewish law, so the Second Council would be made up of Gentile leaders, who would recognize and welcome the Jewish believers in Yeshua without requiring them to abandon their Jewish identity and practice."

The Jewish members of the steering committee include some of the most prominent figures in Messianic Judaism such as Dan Juster, Marty Waldeman, and Jonathan Bernis. Some of the gentile members of the steering committee were Johannes Fictenbauer, a Catholic deacon from Vienna, Austria and the founder of an ecumenical charismatic community in Vienna in the 1970's and since 1998 the personal delegate of the Archbishop of Vienna for relations with the free churches; Brian Cox, an Episcopal priest in Santa Barbara, California; Peter Hocken, a Roman Catholic priest presently living in Maryland: and one spot still held open for a representative from the Orthodox Church.

CONCLUSION

David Baron wrote of the dangers of the Messianic Movement in 1911 in the article titled "Messianic Judaism; or Judaising Christianity." In part he warns:

- 1) "The national continuity of Israel as the 'everlasting nation,' and their restoration to their own land and future blessing among the nations of the earth, are guaranteed by the covenants and promises of God, which can never fail. But what these Judaising brethren forget is—first, that during the period of Israel's national unbelief as *new thing* is being formed. Out of Jew and Gentile—yea, from all kindreds and tribes of the earth—God is gathering out 'a people for His Name.' This new people, whose calling is heavenly, whose inheritance is incorruptible, fills also the position and fulfils the mission of Israel during the interval of this present parenthetical dispensation. It is the Kehillah—the *ecclesia*—the Church, or 'congregation of God; it is His 'holy nation,'...through which...He is during the present time carrying out His purpose on the earth."
- 2) "Secondly: Christ being rejected by Israel, and despised by the world in general, those who profess allegiance to Him, and become members of the body of which He is the Head, must be ready to take up the cross and follow Him. And one very heavy part of the cross is the separation which it often involves to disciples, even from among Gentiles, and almost invariably to Jewish believers, from those near and dear to them...So also during this much longer period of national apostasy God's Tabernacle is removed from the camp of corporate official Judaism, and every one from among Israel who in truth seeks the Lord must be prepared 'to go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach' (Hebrews 13:13)."
- 3) "Thirdly: If there is one truth more emphasized than another in the New Testament it is the unity, inter-relation, and interdependence of Jews and Gentiles in the one true Church of Christ, in which 'there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female,' but all are one in Christ Jesus...Now, to say that in the One Church of Christ one set of rules, one attitude in relation to certain rites and observances enjoined in the law, and certain earthly or 'national' hopes and expectations befit and are incumbent on its Gentile members, is nothing less than to try to raise up again the middle wall of partition which Christ by His death hath broken down, and to introduce confusion into the one 'House of the Living God.'"

"Bearing his reproach" prepares us for the rejection that will come from our brethren according to the flesh when we serve him.