

**Must Jewish People
Convert to Christianity
to be Saved?**

by
Neil Snyder

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About the Author

Neil Snyder earned a Ph.D. degree in strategic management from the University of Georgia in 1979, and he taught leadership and strategy at the University of Virginia for 25 years.

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In 2009, he created a blog called *SnyderTalk* that focuses on Israel and the Middle East. It has a large and growing worldwide readership. The URL for *SnyderTalk* is www.snydertalk.com.

He is the author of many books including *His Name is Yahweh*, *His Name is Yahweh: Revised Edition*, *What Will You Do with the Rest of Your Life?*, *Stand!*, *Falsely Accused*, *Vision, Values & Courage*, and *The Will to Lead*.

During his tenure at UVA, he served as Policy Advisor for Regulatory Reform to Governor Charles S. Robb of Virginia (1982-1985), and he was co-chairman in 1985 and chairman in 1986 of Governor's Conferences on Small Business in Virginia. In 1985, he received the Small Business

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Advocacy Award from the Virginia Chamber of Commerce.

He served as deacon at Milledge Avenue Baptist Church in Athens, Georgia while working on his doctorate and at Crozet Baptist Church in Crozet, Virginia while teaching at the University of Virginia.

Must Jewish People Convert to Christianity to be Saved?

The apostle Paul gets a bad rap. Most of the time, people who read his letters to the Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians, for example, miss essential points that he was making.

The reasons are many, but this much is certain. Paul never intended to create a new religion.

True Christianity isn't a religion at all. It's Judaic in every way possible. That's not my opinion. That's what the Messiah said. Paul said the same thing. I believe them. You should, too.

Before proving those points, I want to say a few words about a critical moment in human history when a perverted form of "Christianity" was transformed into a religion by a tyrannical ruler with sinister motives.

Constantine and the Great Divide Between Jews and Gentiles

In the 300s A.D., the Roman Emperor Constantine did create a new religion. We know it as the Roman Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church is huge. According to the Vatican, there are about 1.2 billion Roman Catholics in the world today.¹

The following statistics on Catholicism were reported 7 years ago:

“As of 2010, there are nearly 1.1 billion Catholics, up from an estimated 291 million in 1910. Catholics comprise 50 percent of all Christians worldwide and 16 percent of the world's total population.”²

Because of its size, influence, and vast wealth, the world sees the Catholic Church as the legitimate representative of Christianity. Just as disturbing, they think the pope speaks for all Christians.

That's not true, but most people believe it anyway. They have no idea that Catholicism is a man-made religion. It was introduced by a despot, and it

¹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-21443313>

² <http://www.livescience.com/27244-the-world-s-catholic-population-infographic.html>

has developed into a religious/political organization with serious moral problems.³

Constantine's animosity toward Jewish people knew no bounds. He did everything in his power to drive a wedge between Judaism and his new church. For instance,

1. Constantine forbade Passover and substituted a festival for the fertility goddess Ishtar in its place. Hence, the name "Easter".
2. He introduced Christmas to coincide with the annual Sun god festival, because Sun god worship was central to Roman culture.
3. He also abandoned Yahweh's 4th Commandment to honor the Sabbath day and keep it holy and substituted in its place first day or Sun Day Sabbath, because it coincided with the traditions of Sun god worshippers.

Under Constantine's rule, anyone who rejected his new religion and the traditions he imposed was treated harshly. Jewish believers were Constantine's first victims. They refused to abandon Yahweh. Many of them paid for their faithfulness with their lives.

³ <http://yournewswire.com/pope-francis-absolves-pedophile-priests/>

The Protestant Reformation was an attempt to come out from underneath the Catholic umbrella, but it didn't go far enough. Vestiges of Catholicism remain important attributes of Protestant churches today. Right now, higher-ups in the Catholic hierarchy regard Protestant churches as Catholic because they still indulge in Sun Day Sabbath.⁴ I think they are onto something.

Contrary to popular opinion, Constantine was not a Christian.⁵ He was a sun worshiper. He simply used the Catholic religion to solidify his hold on power. It worked politically, but the effects on Christendom have been profound.

Thanks largely to Constantine's influence, the great divide between Christianity and Judaism persists to this day. But the dividing walls are coming down as more and more believers are being led by Yahweh's Spirit to search for the truth.

Thankfully, most "Catholics" are Catholic in name only. They were raised in a "Catholic" family and went to a Catholic church from time to time when they were children. That's the extent of their Catholicism.

Most Catholics have no idea what Yahweh said or what He expects from us. If they did, they

⁴ <https://www.sabbathtruth.com/free-resources/article-library/id/916/catholic-church-admits-they-made-the-change>

⁵ <http://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/was-constantine-christian>

wouldn't deify Mary, the Messiah's mother. That violates the 1st Commandment and is as basic as it gets. It's called idolatry, and it's a serious offense.

That's just one example of Catholic perversion. There are many others.

Leaders in the Catholic Church intentionally misrepresented what Paul said and made their distortions of what he said central to their religion. Paul didn't do that and never would have done it because he had no intention of creating a religion.

The Sect of the Nazarenes

The first Christians were Jews. They were a sect of Judaism known as the Sect of the Nazarenes. Their beliefs were entirely Jewish and were based on Yahweh's word, the Tanach.

Nazarenes were different from other Jews in only one way. They understood that through the Messiah Yahweh had accomplished what He promised to do: redeem and save us.

Nazarenes did not introduce anything new much less start a new religion. They simply understood what Yahweh had been saying all along.

Paul was a Pharisee. He was a protégé of Gamaliel⁶ and a rising star in Rabbinic Judaism that is

⁶ Gamaliel was a leading authority in the Sanhedrin in the early 1st century A.D.

based on Halacha, not the Tanach. I'll say more about Halacha later, but for now, I want to point out that at first Paul was the nemesis of Nazarenes.

The Messiah's teachings threatened the existing Pharisaic power structure and put the livelihoods of the priestly class in jeopardy. Most of them were Pharisees. Paul did their bidding by hunting down Nazarenes and bringing them to Jerusalem for trials before the Sanhedrin. Paul even participated in Stephen's murder.⁷ He held the outer garments of those who stoned him to death.

The priestly class in Israel at the time of the Messiah lived large. They stood to lose a lot of wealth, power, and social standing if Yahweh's principles were applied. That's why they hated the Messiah so much and that's why they tried to stamp out the young and growing Sect of the Nazarenes.

In *SnyderTalk*, I have included a video that I took in the Wohl Museum in the Old City of Jerusalem.⁸ It shows the remains of priestly dwellings near the Temple Mount at the time of the Messiah.

They lived like kings. It's no wonder that Pharisees were threatened by the Messiah and His faithful followers, the Nazarenes.

Interestingly, the priests' way of life came to an abrupt halt on the 9th of Av in 70 A.D. when

⁷ Acts 22: 20.

⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F7lQNSHh_bM

Roman forces sacked Jerusalem and destroyed Yahweh's Temple. I'll say more about that later because it's important.

Driving Nazarenes from Synagogues

After the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and Yahweh's Temple, the number of Jewish people believing in the Messiah grew rapidly. Their numbers continued to grow, and they were regarded as a serious threat by the rabbis.

In 70 A.D., Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakki asked the Roman general in Jerusalem, Vespasian,⁹ for permission to open a small school in the seacoast town of Yavneh. Vespasian consented, and Zakki, along with a small group of leading rabbis, went to Yavneh and modified a Jewish benediction in an attempt to drive Nazarenes from the synagogues. They were fearful that the Nazarenes' practice of fraternizing with Gentiles would eventually lead to the assimilation of most, if not all, Jews.

According to the Babylonian Talmud,

“Our Rabbis taught: Simeon ha-Pakuli arranged the eighteen benedictions in order before Rabban Gamaliel in Jabneh. Said Rabban Gamaliel to the Sages: Can any one among you frame a benediction relating to the

⁹ Vespasian became Roman Emperor. He founded the Flavian dynasty.

Minim [Nazarenes]? Samuel the Lesser arose and composed it.”¹⁰

The benediction they modified is known as the *birkat ha-Minim*. This is how the modified portion read after changes were made:

“And for Nazarenes let there be no hope, and let all wickedness perish as in a moment; let all thine enemies be speedily cut off, and the dominion of arrogance do thou uproot and crush, cast down and humble speedily in our days. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who breakest the enemies and humblest the arrogant.”¹¹

Jewish people were expected to recite this benediction three times a day. When called upon, they were expected to read it aloud in the synagogue. Obviously, Nazarenes could not read it or recite it, because it was a condemnation of them and the Messiah.

When they refused to read or recite it, they were identified as Nazarenes and were no longer welcome in synagogues. Thus, for the most part, the *birkat ha-Minim* achieved the primary goal of the rabbis meeting in Yavneh. It divided Nazarenes from other Jews—a situation that persists to this day.

¹⁰ Berakoth 28b-29a.

¹¹ Moore, Phillip. *The End of History—Messiah Conspiracy, Vol. I*, Atlanta: Ramshead Press International Corporation, 1996, p. 337.

Contemporary Jews will not recognize the modified language in the *birkat ha-Minim* because it was changed again once Nazarenes were effectively driven from the synagogues. This is how it reads today:

“And for slanderers let there be no hope, and let all wickedness perish as in a moment; let all thine enemies be speedily cut off, and the dominion of arrogance do thou uproot and crush, cast down and humble speedily in our days. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who breakest the enemies and humblest the arrogant.”¹²

In his book *Judaism: The Evolution of a Faith*, Rabbi Phillip Sigal said that the rabbis meeting in Yavneh did what they did for political reasons.¹³ They wanted to unify the Jewish people and establish a hierarchy with themselves at the top of the pyramid.

Obviously, Nazarenes could not accept what the rabbis wanted to accomplish. The Messiah, Yahweh, alone was at the top of their pyramid. Thus, they were effectively excluded from Jewish life.

Rabbi Akiva Drove Another Nail in the Coffin

¹² Moore, Phillip. *The End of History—Messiah Conspiracy, Vol. I*, Atlanta: Ramshead Press International Corporation, 1996, p. 337.

¹³ Sigal, Rabbi Phillip. *Judaism: The Evolution of a Faith*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1988, p. 80.

Rabbi Akiva¹⁴ is one of the most prominent Jewish sages of all time. He was a major contributor to the Mishnah and to Mishnah Halacha.

During the Bar Kochba Rebellion (135 A.D. to 137 A.D.), Nazarenes fought alongside other Jews to oust the Roman occupiers from the Promised Land. At first, things went well for Bar Kochba's forces. That prompted Akiva to declare that he was the messiah.¹⁵

Akiva's declaration infuriated Nazarenes, because they knew the Messiah. They could not continue to support Bar Kochba under that condition. Not long after Nazarenes withdrew their support, Roman forces defeated Bar Kochba.

Akiva blamed Nazarenes for Bar Kochba's defeat and declared that they were not Jewish. But he didn't stop there. He forbade any contact whatsoever between Jewish people and other Jews who belonged to the Sect of the Nazarenes.

In Akiva's eyes, it was as though Nazarenes ceased to exist. That tradition is still in effect today, but it is much less troublesome than it was when Akiva made his pronouncement because most Jews don't take Judaism seriously.¹⁶

¹⁴ <http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/rabbi-akiba/>

¹⁵ <http://www.jewishhistory.org/bar-kochba/>

¹⁶ <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/01/us/poll-shows-major-shift-in-identity-of-us-jews.html>

Akiva's proclamation was outrageous. Jewishness is not determined by beliefs or by actions. It's based solely on lineage.

According to Lawrence Schiffman, author of *Who was a Jew?: Rabbinic and Halakic Perspectives on the Jewish-Christian Schism*, the rabbis meeting in Yavneh never questioned the Jewishness of Nazarenes. Rabbinic law at the time prescribed the conditions under which people were considered Jewish. Either their mother had to be a Jew or they had to convert to Judaism. For males, conversion required immersion, acceptance of the Torah, and a sacrifice. If a person met those conditions, he was considered Jewish no matter what he believed and no matter what he did.¹⁷

Akiva's shameless pomposity was breathtaking. It defied logic, common sense, and Halacha. Even so, he did what he did, and it was enthusiastically supported by the vast majority of Jewish people living in Israel at that time.

In the years that followed, more and more Gentiles became believers, and Nazarenes who had been driven out of the synagogues and declared non-Jews became a minority of believers. Keep in mind that Nazarenes never made an attempt to present their beliefs as a new religion. They always

¹⁷ Schiffman, Lawrence, *Who was a Jew?: Rabbinic and Halakic Perspectives on the Jewish-Christian Schism*, KTAV Publishing House, Hoboken, NJ, 1985, p. 51-54.

understood that their beliefs were Judaic through-and-through.

Constantine was born about 150 years after Akiva died. As I said, for political reasons, Constantine did manufacture a new religion called “Christianity”. It worked for him politically, but it had terrible consequences for believers, Nazarenes in particular.

Ironically, Nazarenes who had been reduced to non-Jewish status by Akiva became targets for Constantine because of their Jewishness. They refused to betray Yahweh, so they became his mortal enemies. Many of them were murdered for adhering to Yahweh’s commands.

Constantine and Akiva have done more harm to Jewish believers than anyone else in human history. Akiva was first by more than a century.

More Wedges between Jewish people and the Messiah

In the Middle Ages, Rabbis Shlomo Yitschaki (Rashi) and Moses Maimonides (Rambam), two of the greatest rabbis ever to have lived, looked upon the Messiah as a “stumbling block.” They believed that Nazarenes helped to bring about all the atrocities inflicted on the Jewish race after His death and led

most of the known world to worship someone other than Yahweh.¹⁸

Today, most, although not all, rabbis look upon the Messiah as someone very much like the anti-Messiah referred to in the New Testament. They see Him as a counterfeit, a deceiver. They have such low regard for Him that they continue to reject the Jewishness of His Jewish followers.

Ironically, they regard atheistic Jews as real Jews. Their logic is difficult to comprehend because it is so convoluted, but it is true nonetheless.

Hatred of the Messiah runs deep in Jewish tradition, Halacha. That's a simple fact.

Getting Back to Paul

One day, Paul had a personal encounter with the Resurrected Messiah, Yahweh, on the road to Damascus. Yahweh opened his eyes literally and figuratively so that he could see, and He gave Paul an assignment. Paul would become the apostle to Gentiles.

Paul did his job. The problems we have today with his letters have nothing to do with him or with what he wrote. They have to do with the fact that

¹⁸ Scherman, Rabbi Nosson, *The Stone Edition Tanach, The ArtScroll Series®*, Mesorah Publications, Brooklyn, New York, 1996, p. 1806.

over the centuries people have misused and abused Paul's letters to create a religion.

The first culprits were Jewish religious leaders. Next came Constantine and those who adhered to Catholicism. Protestants are guilty, too, because they have done far too little to distance themselves from Catholics.

As I said, true Christianity is not a religion at all. Its basic precept is that Yahweh became a Man and did what He told Moses and the prophets that He would do. That was the crux of Paul's message, and it came straight from the Tanach.

Now let's turn our attention to Halacha.

Yahweh's Law vs. Halacha

Most people today who claim to be Christians don't understand that Paul talked about two laws. One of them is from Yahweh. It's called the Law, and it's presented in the Tanach—i.e., the Torah, Prophets, and Writings or the Old Testament.

The other is man-made law. It's called "the law", too, but it's also referred to as the traditions of the Jews, the Oral Tradition, and Halacha. It is not from Yahweh.

It's impossible to understand what Paul said unless you differentiate between Yahweh's Law and Halacha.

In the minds of religious Jews dating back more than 2,500 years to the time of the Babylonian captivity, Halacha has had precedence over Yahweh's Law in much the same way that Supreme Court decisions have precedence over laws passed by legislative bodies. That is something Yahweh did not instruct and will not condone.

Paul's Letter to the Romans

Paul's letter to the Romans is arguably the best recitation of the Gospel in the New Testament. In it, Paul laid out the foundation for faith in Yahweh, and he used the Tanach (Yahweh's Law) to prove every point he made.

Take a look Romans 1: 1-6. In those introductory verses, Paul explained the purpose of his letter:

Paul, a bond-servant of Y'shua the Messiah, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of Elohim, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, who was declared the Son of Elohim with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Y'shua the Messiah our Master, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring

about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His Name's sake, among whom you also are the called of Y'shua the Messiah.

Paul's introduction to Romans makes these points clearly:

1. Y'shua is the Messiah. He is the descendant of David who was promised by Yahweh to redeem and save/deliver us.
2. Paul's message is from the Scriptures (i.e., the Tanach/Old Testament). His purpose was to show that the Scriptures point to Y'shua as the Messiah.
3. Paul did not introduce anything new. His goal was "to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles." It's the same faith that Abraham had, not a new faith.

Stated simply, in his letter to the Romans Paul did not add anything to Scripture. He simply explained what the Scriptures actually say. Nazarenes did the same thing.

Regrettably, most believers today are not as familiar with the Tanach/Old Testament as they should be, so they don't realize that Paul was quoting Scripture to prove his points.¹⁹ Bible publishers, editors, and translators contribute to the problem.

¹⁹ Paul quoted the Tanach more than 80 times in Romans.

Typically, they do a poor job of connecting the Old and New Testaments.

Even study Bible's with notes, concordances, and cross references tend to focus on the way the New Testament holds together across different writers, but they ignore the fact that every New Testament writer holds together with what Yahweh told us in the Tanach.

In Romans 10: 1-4, Paul alludes to Halacha:

Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to Elohim for them [Jewish people] is for their salvation. For I testify about them that they have a zeal for Elohim, but not in accordance with knowledge. For not knowing about Elohim's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of Elohim. For the Messiah is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Jewish religious leaders demonstrated their zeal for Yahweh by creating a vast array of laws called Halacha. They are far more restrictive than the laws that Yahweh gave to Moses and the prophets.

According to Paul, they didn't understand Yahweh's plan for our redemption and salvation. Therefore, they did not "subject themselves" to His righteousness. Instead, they established their own

righteousness, codified it, and enforced it as law. That was a terrible mistake.

Making matters infinitely worse, they referred to the Messiah as a pagan “god-man” and ridiculed those who believed what Yahweh told Moses and the prophets. They even created a new name for Him. They called Him Yeshu instead of Y’shua because Yeshu means “may His Name and memory be blotted out.”²⁰ It was a deliberate slur that Jewish people who don’t know any better continue to parrot.

Halacha is problematic because many times it blatantly contradicts Yahweh’s explicit commands in the Tanach. The best example of this is the prohibition in Halacha²¹ against saying Yahweh’s Name even though Yahweh commanded us repeatedly to declare His Name to the world.

As I said, the Tanach points to the Messiah.²² In his letters, that was Paul’s primary focus. He was attempting to undo the damage done by Halacha and to give Yahweh’s word (the Tanach), its proper place.

For instance, Psalm 118: 19-24 refers to the Messiah:

Open to me the gates of righteousness; I shall enter through them, I shall give thanks to

²⁰ <http://www.ariel.org/qa/qyname.htm>

²¹ See Sanhedrin 7: 5.

²² See *His Name is Yahweh: Revised Edition* by Neil Snyder for details.

Yahweh. This is the gate of Yahweh; the righteous will enter through it. I shall give thanks to You, for You have answered me, and You have become my salvation. The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner stone. This is Yahweh's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which Yahweh has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

The Messiah is “the Stone which the builders rejected”, and He “has become the chief corner stone” just as the Psalm says. Paul used Psalm 118: 19-24 to support his points in Romans.

Yahweh's Law is instruction in righteousness, and it is good. In the end, it shows us that no one is righteous, not even one, and that we need a Redeemer and Savior.

That's exactly what Psalm 14: 1-3 says:

The fool says in his heart, “There is no Elohim.” They are corrupt, and their ways are vile; there is no one who does good. Elohim looks down from heaven on all mankind to see if there are any who understand, any who seek Elohim. Everyone has turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

Paul used Psalm 14 to buttress his arguments in Romans.

Since no one is righteous, no one is qualified to be our Redeemer and Savior. Yahweh solved the problem by becoming a Man to take the penalty for our sins upon Himself. He is not a pagan “god-man”. He is El Shaddai, El Elyon, Yahweh.

This is how Isaiah explained it in Isaiah 53: 6:

“All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but Yahweh has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.”

The Messiah is the “Him” referred to in Isaiah 53: 6. We know that His Name is Yahweh because Yahweh told Jeremiah the Messiah’s Name.²³

In Romans, Paul refers to Isaiah’s prophecies repeatedly to prove his points, including Isaiah 53: 6.

Romans 10: 13 is the heart and soul of Paul’s message. He said,

“Whoever calls upon the Name of the Lord will be saved.”

Believers know that Paul is talking about the Messiah in Romans 10: 13, but most of them think he is referring to the name Jesus. They are wrong.

In Romans 10: 13, Paul is quoting the prophet Joel. This is what Joel said:

²³ See Jeremiah 23: 5-6.

“Whoever calls upon the Name of Yahweh will be saved.”²⁴

Since we are incapable of perfect obedience to Yahweh’s Law, it should be obvious that we are even less capable of adhering perfectly to an even more stringent set of man-made laws. The point is that pursuing righteousness by anything except faith in Yahweh is counterproductive.

That’s what Paul meant when he said,

I say then, Elohim has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. Elohim has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with Elohim against Israel? “Lord, they have killed Your prophets, they have torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life.” But what is the divine response to him? “I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to Elohim’s gracious choice. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. (Romans 11: 1-6)

²⁴ Joel 2: 32, Joel 3: 5 in the Tanach.

The “works” referred to at the end of that passage from Romans 11 is a reference to Halacha. Paul is saying that strict adherence to Halacha (i.e., works) is not a substitute for faith in Yahweh and His sacrifice on our behalf.

Of course, Yahweh wants and expects us to do good works for Him, but works that Yahweh calls “good” stem from faith in Him and obedience to His word and the leading of His Spirit. Anything else, no matter how good it may appear to be, doesn’t pass Yahweh’s test.

Paul Abided by the Law and He Taught All Believers to Follow His Example

Paul was a Law-abiding believer. If you have any doubts, take a look at Acts 21: 17-26:

After we arrived in Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. After he had greeted them, he began to relate one by one the things which Elohim had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

And when they heard it they began glorifying Elohim; and they said to him, “You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law; and they have been told about you, that you are

teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.

What, then, is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. Therefore do this that we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; take them and purify yourself along with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads; and all will know that there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you, but that you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the Law.

But concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we wrote, having decided that they should abstain from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication.”

Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself along with them, went into the temple giving notice of the completion of the days of purification, until the sacrifice was offered for each one of them.

Initially, Yahweh’s Laws contained in the Tanach had to be applied differently to Gentile converts. Acts 15: 6-11 provides a glimpse of what I’m talking about:

The apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter. After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them,

“Brethren, you know that in the early days Elohim made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. And Elohim, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. Now therefore why do you put Elohim to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we are saved through the grace of Master Y’shua the Messiah, in the same way as they also are.”

In Acts 15: 6-11, Peter was commenting on criticism that had been leveled against Paul by a group of Pharisees who had become believers in the Messiah. They mistakenly thought that circumcision was required for salvation. Peter was making the point that we are saved by grace through faith in Yahweh. That’s the same point that Paul made in Ephesians 2: 8-9.

It has always been true that faith comes first. In Genesis 15: 6, we are told that “Abraham believed Yahweh [had faith in Yahweh] and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.”

Circumcision, as important as it is, is an outward sign, but faith is a matter of the heart. Saving faith has to do with Yahweh writing His Law on our hearts so that we want to obey Him because we love Him and because it's the right thing to do. Yahweh really wants circumcised hearts.

Circumcision is like baptism in this regard. Baptism saves no one, but baptism is required. People are baptized to symbolize their union with the Messiah through His death, burial, and resurrection into a new life, hence the phrase “being born again”. The old self is put away, and a new life begins.

Circumcision is required, too, and it, too, is symbolic. Is circumcision just for Jewish people? I don't think so.

If you think circumcision is not important, take a look at what Yahweh did when Moses failed to circumcise his son:

Now it came about at the lodging place on the way that Yahweh met him [Moses] and sought to put him to death. Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and threw it at Moses' feet, and she said, “You are indeed a bridegroom of blood to me.” So He [Yahweh] let him [Moses] alone. At that time she said, “You are a bridegroom of blood”—because of the circumcision.²⁵

²⁵ Exodus 4: 24-26.

According to Yahweh's Law, circumcision is to be performed on 8-day-old male children, long before they can manifest faith. Clearly, it is symbolic.

New Gentile believers were not babies. They were able to reason and make the conscious decision to become faithful followers of Yahweh. In due course, the Holy Spirit would show them what they needed to do.

Since circumcision is important to Yahweh, one would expect that the Holy Spirit would lead new Gentile believers to be circumcised as an act of obedience. Nothing is said about that, though.

Again, Peter and Paul were making the point that symbolic acts are not substitutes for faith, and they were putting circumcision and other symbolic acts in their proper place. They were not disputing what the Law says about circumcision.

The "yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear" that Peter referred to in Acts 15 has to do with our inability to obey Yahweh's laws perfectly. That's why we need a Redeemer and Savior.

As I said, adding a vast array of even more restrictive man-made laws only made matters worse. It was the same as creating another religion. It demonstrated clearly that the people doing it didn't understand what Yahweh wants and expects.

There are many examples of this, but I'll provide just one. The Torah forbids boiling a kid in its mother's milk.²⁶ That's straightforward and simple, but over the centuries rabbis have come up with many laws relating to that command and imposed them on Jewish people through Halacha.

For instance, Jewish people aren't allowed to eat cheeseburgers because of that command, and they must have two refrigerators and two areas for preparing meals because of that command. For all practical purposes, that means Halacha requires Jewish people to have two kitchens in their homes.

The list goes on and on. Halacha can be ridiculous. Even so, religious Jews adhere to Halacha because they think it pleases Yahweh. They are wrong. Yahweh will not allow us to create a religion with all sorts of do's and don'ts and substitute man-made rules for faith in Him.

That's what Paul and the other writers of the New Testament were saying. All of them pointed to the Tanach as Scripture. So did the Messiah.

Therefore, with the possible exception of Revelation,²⁷ the New Testament isn't Scripture, and writers of the New Testament didn't present it as Scripture. That's a hard pill for many churchgoers to swallow.

²⁶ Exodus 34: 26, Exodus 23: 19, and Deuteronomy 14: 21.

²⁷ Revelation may be Scripture. I think it is, but I'm still praying for insights.

Paul's Testimony before King Agrippa

What better witness about Paul's beliefs and about what he was trying to accomplish could we have than Paul himself? This is what he told King Agrippa:

“In regard to all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, I consider myself fortunate, King Agrippa, that I am about to make my defense before you today; especially because you are an expert in all customs and questions among the Jews; therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.

So then, all Jews know my manner of life from my youth up, which from the beginning was spent among my own nation and at Jerusalem; since they have known about me for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion. And now I am standing trial for the hope of the promise made by Elohim to our fathers; the promise to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly serve Elohim night and day. And for this hope, O King, I am being accused by Jews. Why is it considered incredible among you people if Elohim does raise the dead?

So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Y'shua of

Nazareth. And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them. And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.

[According to Halacha,²⁸ blasphemy simply means saying the Name Yahweh. Paul was a promising, young Pharisee, and Pharisees were strong believers in Halacha. In the beginning, so was Paul.]

While so engaged as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me. And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' And I said, 'Who are You, my Master?' And our Master said, 'I am Y'shua whom you are persecuting. But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a

²⁸ Sanhedrin 7: 5.

minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to Elohim, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.’

So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to Elohim, performing deeds appropriate to repentance. For this reason some Jews seized me in the temple and tried to put me to death. So, having obtained help from Elohim, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; that the Messiah was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He would be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.’²⁹

Paul’s message was straight from the Tanach. This is precisely what he said:

²⁹ Acts 26: 2-23.

“I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place.”³⁰

We must completely ignore Paul’s personal testimony to conclude that he added anything to Scripture. He went out of his way to say that he didn’t.

The truth is what it is. My job is to tell it. If you think that I’ve gone too far, search the Bible and you will see that I haven’t.

What did the Messiah say?

Looking at what the Messiah said is a good place to start. His Sermon on the Mount is the most succinct presentation in the New Testament about the primacy of Yahweh’s word, the Tanach, and the foolishness of subordinating it to anything especially Halacha. It’s presented in Matthew chapters 5 through 7.

For example, in Matthew 5: 17-20, the Messiah explained His mission:

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets [the Tanach]; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least

³⁰ Acts 26: 22.

stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands [the Tanach] will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law [Halacha], you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

The Messiah made it clear that He came to fulfill “the Law and the Prophets” (the Tanach). He said that they are still in effect and that they will be in effect until “heaven and earth disappear”. That hasn’t happened yet, so they still apply.

Then He differentiated between Yahweh’s Law (the Tanach) and Halacha twice:

- “Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven....”³¹ The Pharisees set aside Yahweh’s commands and taught people to obey Halacha instead.
- “For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the

³¹ Matthew 5: 19.

teachers of the law (Halacha), you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”³² The righteousness of the Pharisees was based on strict obedience to Halacha. Yahweh’s righteousness is based on faith in Him and obedience to Him and the leading of His Spirit.

Pharisees and other teachers of Halacha did not understand the true meaning of Yahweh’s word, the Tanach. They did not comprehend the extent to which Yahweh expects us to apply His logic in our daily lives. Thus, they created a form of righteousness, Halacha, enforced it as law, and substituted it for Yahweh’s word, the Tanach.

The Messiah went on to explain how all-encompassing Yahweh’s word is. For example, take a look at Matthew 5: 21-22:

“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca’ [you good-for-nothing], is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.”

³² Matthew 5: 20.

The Messiah said that Yahweh's command "do not murder" extends to anger, because anger is one step removed from the act of murder. In other words, Yahweh looks at our hearts and judges our thoughts, attitudes, and intentions, not just our physical acts.

Since all of us have been angry, we are guilty of breaking Yahweh's Law. Thus, all of us need a Redeemer and Savior. The Messiah came to pay the price for our sins. He accomplished that with His death, burial, and resurrection. He is our Redeemer and our Savior.

The Messiah Distinguishes between Yahweh's Law and Halacha

In John chapter 8, the Messiah addressed the distinction between Yahweh's Law and Halacha specifically. Let's take a look.

The Messiah was on the Temple Mount engaging in a discussion with a group of people who believed in Him, but many religious leaders (Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes) were there as well. They didn't believe in Him.

The scribes and Pharisees confronted the Messiah by bringing a woman to Him who was "caught in adultery, in the very act".³³ They said,

³³ John 8: 4.

“Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?”³⁴

The Messiah’s response is well-known, but not well-understood. He said,

“He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.”³⁵

Obviously, the woman was guilty according to Yahweh’s Law. If she was caught in “the very act” of adultery, so was a man. He was guilty, too, but they didn’t bring him to the Messiah.

Why not? The Law applies equally to men and women.

The scribes and Pharisees were testing the Messiah to see if He would violate Yahweh’s Law or suggest that violating the Law was of no consequence. His response stopped them dead in their tracks.

He didn’t deny their claim about the Law, but He pointed to their attempt at trickery by telling them that the first person to throw a stone at her should be sinless.

All of them were guilty, and they knew it. They just walked away. When they were gone, He turned to the woman and said,

³⁴ John 8: 5.

³⁵ John 8: 7.

“I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more.”³⁶

He forgave the woman and told her to repent. That’s what “sin no more” means.

The crowd didn’t disperse. The Messiah addressed these remarks to those who remained:

“I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”³⁷

That’s one of the Messiah’s “I Am” statements. The Name Yahweh derives from the Hebrew verb *hayah*. It means “to exist”. By using the definition of the Name, He was claiming to be Yahweh.

Most Bible translations say “I Am”, but “I Exist” is more accurate. That’s a minor point for purposes of this discussion.

The Messiah made the same point again in verse 18:

“I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me.”³⁸

The miracles that the Messiah performed were testimony from the Father. No one could do what

³⁶ John 8: 11.

³⁷ John 8: 12.

³⁸ John 8: 18.

He did unless there was Divine intervention. The fact that He actually performed miracles is well-documented in the New Testament and in the Talmud.

Large crowds flocked to the Messiah for healing. Most of the people who were with Him that day on the Temple Mount wanted to receive healing or they wanted to watch someone being healed, but the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes were looking for an opportunity to condemn Him.

The Messiah gave the religious leaders (His adversaries) some ammunition in verse 24:

“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”³⁹

Clearly, the Messiah was saying that if they didn’t believe He is Yahweh they would die in their sins. He did not say the Name Yahweh. Instead, He used the definition of the Name.

According to Halacha, only religious Jews were allowed to say “Yahweh” and only on special occasions. As I said, if everyday people uttered His Name, it was considered blasphemy, and the penalty was death.

The Messiah’s religious adversaries got the message:

³⁹ John 8: 24.

So they [the religious leaders] were saying to Him, “Who are You?” The Messiah said to them, “What have I been saying to you from the beginning?”⁴⁰

When they asked Him “Who are You?”, they were trying to trick Him again. They wanted Him to say “Yahweh” so they could accuse Him of blasphemy and kill Him. Eventually, they would accomplish their mission,⁴¹ but not that day.

The Messiah gave His adversaries more ammunition in verse 28:

“When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He...”⁴²

The Messiah was referring to His crucifixion. He said that they would discover His true identity after they killed Him.

The Messiah’s crucifixion, burial, and resurrection were foretold in the Tanach.⁴³ Those things had to happen for our forgiveness. As Isaiah said, the penalty for our sins fell upon Him:

“But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-

⁴⁰ John 8: 25.

⁴¹ See Matthew 26: 65.

⁴² John 8: 28.

⁴³ See *His Name is Yahweh: Revised Edition*.

being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.”⁴⁴

Pay close attention to John 8: 30-31, because the Scriptures are His central point:

As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him. So the Messiah was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

He addressed that remark to people who believed Him. In other words, they believed what He told them, and He told them that He is Yahweh. Then, He said that they should “continue in My word” because it’s the truth.

“My word” must refer to the Tanach. In other words, He was talking about Yahweh’s Law, not Halacha, and He wasn’t adding anything to Scripture. He certainly wasn’t talking about the New Testament because it didn’t exist at that time.

The Messiah said that Halacha is evil. See John 8: 44:

“You [the religious leaders] are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father.”

⁴⁴ Isaiah 53: 5.

Must Jewish People Convert to Christianity to be Saved?

By referring to the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes as sons of the devil, the Messiah made clear where Halacha came from.

In Matthew 15: 3, the Messiah asked the religious leaders a question that illustrates my point:

“And why do you break the command of Elohim [in the Tanach] for the sake of your tradition [Halacha]?”

The answer is simple. They broke Yahweh’s Law because they were following the devil. Satan inspired them to believe that their traditions (Halacha) were more important than Yahweh’s word, Scripture.

In effect, their teaching rendered Yahweh’s word null and void. From Yahweh’s perspective, that is a sin of the highest magnitude.

The same problem persists to this day. Jewish religious leaders study and teach Halacha instead of the Tanach. They call themselves “Torah scholars”, but that’s absurd. They are Halacha scholars, and the Messiah told us where Halacha came from.

So, what is the New Testament?

I believe the last two verses of John’s Gospel tell us plainly what the New Testament is:

“This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. Y’shua did many other

things which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.”⁴⁵

If that’s not convincing enough, John made it even clearer in 1 John 1: 1-4:

“What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us—what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Y’shua the Messiah. These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.”

The only logical conclusion is that the New Testament is eyewitness testimony about what the Messiah did and said. It is not Scripture.

That conclusion begs this question: is the New Testament Yahweh inspired?

The answer is absolutely, positively YES! But is it Scripture? No.

⁴⁵ John 21: 24-25.

The New Testament tells us who the Messiah is. He is the manifestation of Yahweh who came to redeem and save us. That was the apostles' message to the world.

How did the apostles show their readers and those with whom they came into personal contact that the Messiah really is Yahweh?

In their writings, they quoted Scripture. In their personal contacts, they quoted Scripture and performed miracles.

What Scripture did the apostles quote?

They quoted the Tanach, the Old Testament.

The Tanach is loaded with evidence that the Messiah is Yahweh. For example, Yahweh told Jeremiah the Messiah's Name:

“Behold, the days are coming,” declares Yahweh, “when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; and He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely; and this is His name by which He will be called, ‘Yahweh our righteousness.’ [Yahweh Tsidkenu]”⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Jeremiah 23: 5-6.

The Messiah is David's righteous Branch. About that fact, there is little or no dispute even among the most religious of religious Jews. Speaking to Jeremiah, Yahweh made it crystal clear that the Messiah is Yahweh and that Yahweh is the "Name by which He will be called".

So, as I said, the New Testament is eyewitness testimony, and it's crucial for that reason. Testimony stands on the strength of corroborating witnesses who have first-hand accounts to share. The New Testament provides that kind of evidence in abundance.

The New Testament is also history. It provides important information about what was taking place in the Promised Land before, during, and after the Messiah's time with us.

Pointing out what the New Testament is should not be interpreted by anyone as a criticism of it. Any criticism that I have is focused on people who have misused the New Testament by making it out to be something that it isn't.

Yahweh has used the New Testament in my life in profound ways to draw me close to Him. I know that it is inspired by Yahweh, but that doesn't make it Scripture.

Besides, the New Testament should be called the Renewed Covenant. Yahweh made a covenant

with the Children of Israel which they broke. That's why they needed a Redeemer and Savior. We do, too.

Yahweh's covenant with His people is discussed exhaustively in the Old Testament/Tanach, and Yahweh told Jeremiah about His plan to renew the covenant:

“Behold, days are coming,” declares Yahweh, “when I will make a new [renewed] covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares Yahweh. “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares Yahweh, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know Yahweh,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares Yahweh, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”⁴⁷

In his note to Matthew 26: 28 which talks about the Last Supper in the Upper Room, Andrew

⁴⁷ Jeremiah 31: 31-34.

Gabriel Roth explained the importance of the Renewed Covenant. The key point and the point that I want to emphasize is that the New Testaments that most Christians read are presented as being something that they are not:

Both Aramaic “**khawdata**” and Hebrew “**chadasha**” means renewed as in Psalm 51: 10, “**renew** a right spirit within me”, Lam. 5: 21 “**renew** our days as of old”. “**Chadasha**” can also be “*new*” or “*repair*” as in Isaiah 61: 4 “**repair** the waste places.” YHWH spoke of the Renewed Covenant in Jeremiah 31: 31-37 that He would “*put my Torah in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts...the seed of Israel also shall never cease from being a nation before Me for ever...says YHWH...*” This is the “Renewed Covenant”; however, even in Paul’s day, the Kingdom that Y’shua offered was being violently counterfeited by religious traditions into something very contrary. Successive Greek theologians (like Marcion) replaced the meaning and importance of “Renewed Covenant” with the term “New Testament” and made a division of “Old and New” Testaments. Torah was and is taught by mainstream Christians to be either for Jews only, or completely abolished; thus, the “New Testament” became laden with anti-Semitism. The hierarchical values of “modern” pagan cultures were syncretized by Greek Gnostic philosophies into the teachings of Y’shua and

Paul to the point that modern day Christianity would be unrecognizable by the original followers of Y'shua as the "*Faith which was once delivered*" (Yehuda [Jude] 1: 3).⁴⁸

In this book, I will not attempt to explain fully the differences between New Testament translations that are based on original Greek and Aramaic manuscripts, but I will say this. The original New Testament was written in Aramaic, not Greek, and the New Testaments that most Christians read today are based on translations from the Greek manuscripts.

Virtually all seminary trained preachers have been taught as an article of faith that the original New Testament manuscripts were written in Greek, not Aramaic. They are wrong, but most of the ones that I have talked with reject the truth and refuse to research the issue.

That's a serious problem and one that needs to be addressed. For a complete explanation, see *Ruach Qadim: Aramaic Origins of the New Testament* by Andrew Gabriel Roth.

Be that as it may, all of the writers of the New Testament including Paul told us that Yahweh completed a vital part of His plan when He became a Man and died for our sins. The Messiah's death, burial, and resurrection inaugurated the Renewed

⁴⁸ Andrew Gabriel Roth, *Aramaic English New Testament*, Netzari Press, 2009, p. 78.

Covenant, not the New Covenant, the same way that Yahweh inaugurated the Covenant with Abraham.⁴⁹

Controversy Abounds

I started out by saying that Paul gets a bad rap. Because of what people have been taught, telling them the truth about the New Testament can generate a lot of controversy and heated discussion.

Most believers, even those who are opening up to the truth, still hold onto vestiges of the past in much the same way that believers who should know better hold onto Christmas, Easter, and Sun Day Sabbath even though they are Satanic in origin because they have fond memories of those times.

Paul never intended for us to believe that Yahweh's Law was "nailed to the cross". It's alive and well. Our sins, not the Law, were nailed to the cross because our Redeemer and Savior paid the price for our transgressions.

Thankfully, Yahweh took care of that Himself. He's the only One who could do it and He did it, but His Law is still in effect. That's what He said.

Controversy abounds. It extends far beyond the New Testament.

⁴⁹ See Genesis chapter 15.

A few years ago, I was explaining the importance of Yahweh's Name to a church group in Texas. I told them that Yahweh's Name has been edited out of their Bibles, even the *King James Version* of the Bible. Since Yahweh's Name appears almost 7,000 times in the Old Testament alone, there are at least that many errors in the Bibles that most of us use.

That's a provable, factual statement. Anyone who is interested can check it out for himself. I've made it easy for everyone. All people need to do is read *His Name is Yahweh: Revised Edition*. It's based entirely on Scripture.

Even so, the preacher of the church told me later that many people in his congregation turned me off when I said that there are errors in the *King James Version* of the Bible. He said that many of them believe that the *KJV* is the only truly inspired version of the Bible and that it is error free.

As a community of believers, we resist the truth because we have a hard time letting go of erroneous things that we have been taught. That has to change.

We Have a Problem and It's not what Most People Think it Is

It started out as a dispute among Jewish people about the primacy of Yahweh's word, the Tanach. The Messiah, His disciples, and the

Nazarenes rejected Halacha, but none of them attempted to create a new religion.

Since Halacha diverges from Yahweh's word drastically, it amounts to the creation of another religion.

Because they believed Yahweh and rejected Halacha, Nazarenes were driven from synagogues. Even so, they still didn't attempt to create a new religion.

In his letters, Paul explained what the Tanach says about the Messiah. He never attempted to create a new religion.

During the Bar Kochba Rebellion, Akiva declared that Nazarenes weren't Jews and forbade contact with them. It was a foolish, spiteful move. It had nothing to do with religion. It was based on personal hatred and nothing more.

In the 300s A.D., Constantine transformed "Christianity" into a new religion. He and those who followed him misused and abused Paul's letters to help in that regard.

In the Middle Ages, the most prominent Jewish sages, Rambam and Rashi, continued to victimize Jewish believers.

The Protestant Reformation didn't go far enough in distancing Protestant churches from the Catholic Church. That problem persists to this day

and that's why leaders in the Catholic Church still regard Protestants as Catholics.

As I said, true Christianity is not a religion. It's Judaic in every way. That's what Paul was talking about when he said,

“For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?”⁵⁰

Yahweh's Word is Supreme

We are still fighting over the primacy of Yahweh's word. Religious Jews prefer Halacha. Most Christians prefer the New Testament. Both groups are wrong.

There should be no doubt about where we will end up when Yahweh weighs in on the matter. He will make it clear to everyone that His word is the Law.

Nothing that I have said should be construed to mean that I minimize the importance of grace in the lives of believers. I am simply saying that grace does not nullify Yahweh's Law. And nothing I have said should be interpreted to mean that I believe the

⁵⁰ Romans 11: 24.

New Testament wasn't inspired by Yahweh's Spirit. I know that it was.

Believers should think long and hard before taking sides against Yahweh.

Jewish People Do Not Have to Convert to “Christianity” to be Saved

The belief that Jewish people must convert to Christianity to be saved is patently absurd. As I said, true Christianity isn't a religion. It's Judaic. It's the same faith that Abraham had.

True Christianity is based on faith in Yahweh, obedience to His word and the leading of His Spirit, and nothing else. No one “joins” a Christian church, and no one “converts” to Christianity. Salvation is based on a relationship between Yahweh and an individual.

All that Jewish people need to do is turn to Yahweh, have faith in Him, and obey Him. That's what Abraham did. It's in the Tanach, not Halacha. That's what Paul was saying.

Prophecy is Being Fulfilled in Front of Our Eyes

The nascent Sanhedrin in Israel recently chose Rabbi Baruch Kahane to serve as *Kohen Gadol*, high priest. That's an important step toward Yahweh's return.

This is what one news report announcing his selection as high priest said about Kahane:

Rabbi Kahane is a prominent scholar, knowledgeable in the complicated laws pertaining to the subject of the Temple Service. He is part of the Halacha Berurah Institute, established by Rabbi Avraham Isaac HaCohen Kook, the first Chief Rabbi of Israel, which deals with the elucidation of Jewish law from its Talmudic sources (Oral Law) and commentaries. He has played a prominent role in all the reenactments of the Temple services performed to date.⁵¹

For almost 2,000 years, rabbis in Israel have been fighting against Yahweh. Interestingly, as I said before, in 70 A.D., forty years after the Messiah's crucifixion, the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and Yahweh's Temple. The Temple has never been rebuilt.⁵²

The Temple's destruction was significant. In his book *The End of Days: Fundamentalism and the Struggle for the Temple Mount*, this is how Gershom Gorenberg explained it:

“Until 70 C.E., Judaism centered on the Temple and burnt offerings. Strikingly, the

⁵¹ <https://www.breakingisraelnews.com/74772/sanhedrin-appoints-high-priest-preparation-third-temple/#McK4cz8TeLi8uzzi>.97

⁵² Daniel 9: 26.

two Jews most responsible for post-Temple religion are remembered as predicting the sanctuary's destruction. 'There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down,' the Gospels quote Jesus as declaring. That was about 40 years before Titus. 'Forty years before the Temple's destruction,' says the Talmud, a crimson ribbon that miraculously turned white each Yom Kippur ceased doing so—that is, the ritual inside Herod's edifice had gone hollow—and the doors of the sanctuary opened by themselves, as if to allow enemies to enter. 'Sanctuary, Sanctuary,' said Yohanan ben Zakkai, a leading rabbi of the time, interpreting the signs, 'I know that your destiny is to be destroyed.'"⁵³

The exact quote from the Talmud that Gorenberg referenced reads as follows:

“During the last forty years before the destruction of the Temple the lot did not come up in the right hand; nor did the crimson-coloured strap become white; nor did the westernmost light shine; and the doors of the Hekal [the Temple] would open by themselves....”⁵⁴

⁵³ Gorenberg, Gershom. *The End of Days: Fundamentalism and the Struggle for the Temple Mount*, New York, The Free Press, 2000, p. 68.

⁵⁴ The Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 39b, p. 186.

30 A.D. to 70 A.D. was a critical interval in the history of the world. In 30 A.D., the year the Messiah was crucified, Yahweh sent a powerful message to the Children of Israel. Every year on Yom Kippur until 30 A.D., the high priest would tie a crimson ribbon around the neck of the scapegoat,⁵⁵ and miraculously it turned white after the sacrifice of the goat whose lot was to die.

That event symbolized Yahweh forgiving the sins of His people, and it is not a folktale. It really happened every year on Yom Kippur until the Messiah was crucified in 30 A.D. Leading rabbis and Jewish sages who lived during that time confirm it.

Yahweh's message was clear. The sacrifices for sin required by the Law, which were only symbols of the ultimate sacrifice that Yahweh would make Himself, were no longer acceptable to Him. The Messiah's death on the tree fulfilled the requirements of the Law concerning sacrifices for sin for all time.

His was the perfect sacrifice. It will never be repeated. According to Paul, Yahweh "wiped out the record of our debt to the Law, which stood against us"⁵⁶ by nailing it to a tree.

In 30 A.D., the priests understood that their sacrifices were no longer pleasing to Yahweh, but they continued making sacrifices anyway until the Romans destroyed the Temple in 70 A.D. In that

⁵⁵ See Leviticus 16: 7-10.

⁵⁶ Colossians 2: 14 from *The New Jerusalem Bible*.

pivotal year, the rabbis eliminated the sacrificial system altogether, and it has not been reinstated to this day.

Rabbi Kahane was installed as high priest because religious leaders in Israel believe that the time is right for reinstating animal sacrifices on the Temple Mount and for rebuilding Yahweh's Temple. They know that the Messiah will play an important part, but they don't know who He is, what He has accomplished, or what comes next.

To do his job properly and to avoid a direct confrontation with Yahweh, Rabbi Kahane must overcome his reliance on Halacha and turn to Yahweh and His word for guidance. That's a tall order, but it will happen in due course.

You can rest assured that the day is coming when Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem will entreat Yahweh for help and know who they are addressing. This is how the Messiah explained it:

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! For I say to you, from now on you

will not see Me until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the Name of Yahweh!’”⁵⁷

The conditions that Jewish people in Israel will face when that day comes will be frightful. When their backs are against the wall, they will finally realize that they have no other alternative except to turn to Yahweh for help, and they will. That’s what Yahweh said.

This is how Yahweh explained it to the prophet Zechariah:

“I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.”⁵⁸

That day may be closer than you think. It could happen at any time.

Jewish People Have a Big Problem

It’s not easy for Jewish people to abandon Halacha. Rabbis have been teaching hatred of the Messiah, Yahweh, for almost 2,000 years, and they have done it well. It’s deeply embedded in Halacha.

⁵⁷ Matthew 23: 37-39.

⁵⁸ Zechariah 12: 10.

In effect, rabbis have created a religion around Halacha, and they are very proud of it. For all practical purposes, Halacha is their Golden Calf.

Religious Jews who understand the importance of the Golden Calf⁵⁹ should pay attention to my warning. Halacha is not what they think it is.

Given what Yahweh said in the Tanach, it is discomfoting to watch intelligent Jewish people try to justify their reliance on Halacha. If they understood the Tanach, they would not be so foolish. The fact that they still turn to Halacha, tells me that they are ignorant about Yahweh's word.

As I said, the rabbis have done their job well, and they will be held accountable. I'm not guessing. That's exactly what the Messiah said.

Closing Comment

I want to close with this quote from C.S. Lewis:

“God will invade. But I wonder whether people who ask God to interfere openly and directly in our world quite realise what it will be like when He does. When that happens, it is the end of the world. When the author walks on to the stage the play is over. God is going to invade, all right: but what is the good of saying you are on His side then, when you

⁵⁹ See Exodus 32.

see the whole natural universe melting away like a dream and something else—something it never entered your head to conceive—comes crashing in; something so beautiful to some of us and so terrible to others that none of us will have any choice left? For this time it will be God without disguise; something so overwhelming that it will strike either irresistible love or irresistible horror into every creature. It will be too late then to choose your side. There is no use saying you choose to lie down when it has become impossible to stand up. That will not be the time for choosing; it will be the time when we discover which side we really have chosen, whether we realised it before or not. Now, today, this moment, is our chance to choose the right side. God is holding back to give us that chance. It will not last forever. We must take it or leave it.”⁶⁰

All of us, Jews and Gentiles, have a choice to make. Will we make the right decision? I hope and I pray that the answer is yes.

⁶⁰ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Simon and Schuster Touchstone, 1996), pp. 65–66.