

The Surprising Response to My 'Rabbi Jesus' Post

On Aug. 22, on the spur of the moment, I posted this on X and on Facebook:

To my surprise, while the post received 1,100 likes on Facebook, where I have 587,000 followers, it received 2,800 likes on X, where I have only 61,000 followers. Why so much interest in such a simple, matter-of-fact post?

As of this writing, the post has been viewed more than 202,000 times on X (which is a lot for one of my posts there). It has also received more than 880 comments, quite a few of them taking issue with the post or feeling the need to clarify it. What's so controversial about what I wrote?

Jesus, along with John the Immerser (aka John the Baptist), was called "rabbi" in the New Testament, while the concept of "reverend" only came into use many centuries later (perhaps beginning in the 15th century).

As for Jesus being a Jew, not a Christian, again, that is a simple matter of historical fact and common-sense logic. That's because the New Testament teaches that Jesus was born King of the Jews and died King of the Jews, whereas the word "Christian" was only coined more than a decade after the Lord's death and Resurrection.

As for His original name, along with that of His mother, again, these are simple, historical facts, as both Jesus and Mary are the product of Hebrew names being transmitted into Greek, then into Latin, then, eventually, into English. This is hardly rocket science.

As for the word Christ, from the Greek *christos*, meaning "anointed," it is a translation of the Hebrew word *mashiach*,

also meaning “anointed,” from which we get “Messiah.” ” But “Christ” was not the Lord’s last name. It was the Greek way of calling Jesus the Messiah.

Breaking News. Spirit-Filled Stories. Subscribe to Charisma on YouTube now!

Of course, as basic as all this is, it is still jarring for some people to hear, as many think of Jesus in exclusively Christian terms to the exclusion of His Jewish roots.

To do so is not just factually inaccurate. It also presents a misleading spiritual picture, raising the obvious question: If Jesus is now so disconnected from His origins and roots, why is He returning to Jerusalem? Why not return to Rome (or Constantinople, or Moscow or the Bible Belt in the USA)?

To take this one step further, does it jar you to hear the names of the apostles in a way that would be closer to how their names sounded in Yeshua’s day? Let’s find out.

Matthew 10:2-4, as rendered in the Jewish New Testament (now part of the Complete Jewish Bible): “These are the names of the 12 emissaries: First, Shim’on, called Kefa, and Andrew his brother, Ya’akov Ben-Zavdai and Yochanan his brother, Philip and Bar-Talmai, T’oma and Mattityahu the tax-collector, Ya’akov Bar-Halfai and Taddai, Shim’on the Zealot, and Y’hudah from K’riot, who betrayed him.”

If this makes you uncomfortable at all, you should ask yourself why. It might reveal some hidden and unhealthy spiritual baggage.

Getting back to my post, though, it seems that a lot of people had a problem with the last line, which stated, “He is the Savior of the world because He is Israel’s Messiah,” with some commenters adding extensive commentary or clarification or correction.

But why did they find it necessary to do so? What's so controversial about these words?

During His earthly ministry, Jesus said He had come only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, sending out His disciples on that same exclusive mission (see Matt. 15:24, 10:5-6). And before His birth, the angel Gabriel explained that He would save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21).

Get your FREE CHARISMA NEWSLETTERS today! Stay up to date with current issues, Holy Spirit news, Christian teachings, Charisma videos & more!

After His Resurrection, He pointed His disciples to prophecies about Him written in the Hebrew Scriptures and asked them, "Did not the Messiah [Greek, "Christ"] have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" (Luke 24:26, NIV).

Yet because the mission of Israel's Messiah included being a light to the nations (see Isa. 11:1-10, 42:1-7), Jesus is not only the Jewish Messiah but also the Savior of the world, and the Great Commission is to all the nations (Matt. 28:18-20).

Put another way, if Jesus failed to be the promised Messiah of Israel, He would be the Savior of no one. Hence my statement, "He is the Savior of the world because He is Israel's Messiah." And it is as both the Savior of the world and the Messiah of Israel that Jesus-Yeshua will return one day, setting up His kingdom in Jerusalem.

That's also why, according to the book of Revelation, the eternal city in which we will dwell with God on earth is called "the New Jerusalem" (see Rev. 21:1-4). And that's why the 12 gates of the city will bear the names of the 12 tribes of Israel, while the 12 foundation stones will bear the name of the 12 (all Jewish) apostles (see Rev. 21:9-14).

And in this eternal, glorious city, all those who have been

redeemed by the blood of Jesus, both Gentile and Jew, will live side by side as equals, without distinction of caste or class. We are all one in Him.

But let's not forget our Savior's history and roots, especially after centuries of Christian leaders portraying Him as a fair-eyed, European Gentile and, today, Muslims portraying Him as a Palestinian liberationist.

Let us recover the biblical, Jewish roots of the faith. This will only deepen and enhance our relationship with our heavenly Father, also known as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

I hope this doesn't trouble you.

Join Charisma Magazine Online to follow everything the Holy Spirit is doing around the world!

Dr. Michael Brown () is the host of the nationally syndicated The Line of Fire radio show. He is the author of over 40 books, including "Can You be Gay and Christian?"; "Our Hands are Stained with Blood"; and "Seizing the Moment: How to Fuel the Fires of Revival." You can connect with him on Facebook, X or YouTube.