

Why I'm Shocked at Robert Jeffress' Comments

(Note: If I had any way of contacting Dr. Jeffress and dialoging with him, I would.)

I had just finished lunch and was watching the news yesterday—Resurrection Day—when Fox-favorite, Pastor Robert Jeffress shared a few thoughts on the resurrection. To be honest, I was excited to hear his thoughts knowing that so many unbelievers would be watching. Most of it was solid, but having spent a good part of my life seeking to expose how Yeshua was a victim of Identity Theft, I nearly fell out of my chair when I heard this completely unbiblical comment.

Within five weeks of the alleged resurrection of Jesus, you had 10,000 Jews in Jerusalem who suddenly gave up their most cherished beliefs, 1,400 years of their religion to follow a new religion of this rabbi named Jesus.

According to Pastor Jeffress:

1. The Jews just *happened* to flock to Jerusalem
2. They gave up their beliefs
3. They turned their back on the Old Covenant Scriptures
4. They followed a man who broke from Judaism to start a *new religion*.

I have a lot of respect for Pastor Jeffress. He has taken some bold stands (Standing w/ Donald Trump is not one of them.) But I was surprised to see his lack of understanding of the Jewish roots of the New Covenant. And if you are wondering why I am so upset about it, just think: **Certainly any Jewish person watching him yesterday would wrongly assume (as I once did) that to believe in Jesus—the Jewish Messiah—you must leave Judaism and join a *new religion*!**

Let's set the record straight.

Shavuot/Pentecost

1. The Jews were in Jerusalem for *Shavuot*—which most believers call Pentecost. God chose that day to pour out this Spirit, because he knew there would be thousands of Jewish pilgrims. Some Christians actually believe that this was the first Pentecost, when in fact it has been going on since Moses (Lev. 23). It is the last of the Spring Feasts and commemorates, according to tradition, the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai.

Fulfilled Their Beliefs

2. The Jews who embraced Yeshua did not “give up their beliefs”—far from it! Yeshua fulfilled their beliefs. They had been yearning for Messiah. If we just read Luke 2, we get a glimpse through the eyes of Hannah and Simeon, of how Israel longed for her *Messiah*. John sends messengers to Yeshua in Matthew 11, asking if he really is the *Jewish Messiah*. Yes, he did not come as many supposed—a conquering king—but they did not need to give up their belief in the God of Israel to believe in the Messiah of Israel.

Hebrew Scriptures Are God-Breathed

3. Jeffress claims that these Messianic Jews turned their back on “1,400 years of religion.” What happened 1,400 years before? I can only assume he is referring to the Law of Moses being given in 1312 B.C. What utter nonsense! Paul uses the Old Testament constantly to prove his claims in the New Testament. Some have even said the New Testament is merely a revelatory commentary on the Old Covenant. Without Zechariah and Daniel, you can't understand Revelation. When Paul says, “All Scripture is God-breathed,” (2 Tim. 3:16) there was no

New Testament—he was referring to the Hebrew Scriptures. Nowhere in the New Covenant is there even a hint of the Jewish believers rejecting the Hebrew Scriptures—or Moses.

In Acts 21, we see Paul going to make a sacrifice at the Temple, at the urging of the apostles, to put to rest the very things Jeffress is claiming. Paul was falsely accused of leaving Judaism and Jewish tradition and teaching other Jewish believers to do so.

“When they heard this, they glorified the Lord. Then they said to him, ‘You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are who believe, and they are all zealous for the law. They have been informed concerning you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to observe the customs. What then shall be done? The assembly will certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come. Therefore do what we tell you. We have four men who have taken a vow. Take these men and be purified with them, and pay their expenses ... Then all will know that what they were told concerning you is nothing, but that you yourself live in observance of the law [Torah]” (Acts 21:20-24).

Paul refers to himself as a “present tense” Pharisee many years after coming to faith, just two chapters later.

No New Religion

4. Lastly, when did anyone in the New Covenant say they were starting a *new religion*? When Peter has his revelation in Matthew 16, he says, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God,” as opposed to, “You are birthing a new religion, foreign to us as Jews.” For nearly the first decade they didn’t even preach to Gentiles—they thought the gospel was *just for Jews*! Only when the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles in Cornelius’ house, shocking Peter, did they start

receiving Gentiles.

If Yeshua started a new religion what in the world were they doing in Acts 15 at the Jerusalem Council discussing whether or not Gentiles had to convert to Judaism? This would not have even been an issue if Jesus started a new religion. And if indeed He started a new religion, that invalidates the entire Old Covenant. Where was God hiding all that time?

Yes, a New Covenant was made—and that according to Jeremiah 31:31 was with Israel primarily—but not a new religion. Islam is a new religion; Mormonism is new religion. The coming of Messiah was a fulfillment of the Jewish prophets.

Changes? Yes.

Now, were there some changes? Absolutely. No longer was there a need for a temple as Yeshua became the once-for-all-time and all-sin sacrifice. We have the revelation of the One New Man, that people from every nation can enjoy salvation through Yeshua without becoming Jewish. And of course, no longer would there be a hierarchy, but every believer would become part of the priesthood. We see the introduction of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers and, of course, the Great Commission. But these were not new decrees, but fulfillment of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Yeshua said, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to abolish, but to fulfill” (Matt. 5:17).

Again, if Jewish people stumble, let them stumble over Yeshua the man, not over our clumsy presentation of Him and His message.

We live in a different time from the first century. A time when, through mass media, someone can reach millions, but not one of the millions can reach that someone. Ideally I could

pick of the phone and call Dr. Jeffress, but being a megachurch pastor and a media figure, understandably, he doesn't have the time to answer every question or call or email. I did tweet to him and hope for a dialogue. I do apologize for venting, but my venting comes from a deep desire to see Jewish people come to faith, and my anger is that his message (and what an opportunity to reach Jewish people!) only solidified the lie that you can't be Jewish and believe in the Jewish Messiah. Thanks for commenting.

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