

Messianic Rabbi: The Day I Quit Being a Christian

Before I start, I hope that all of my Christian friends will read this entire blog before grabbing the pitchforks and torches.

This Friday evening, Yom Teruah (Day of Trumpets) begins, which is also known as Rosh HaShanah (the Jewish new year). With the sounding of the shofar, we begin the season of fall feasts, or holy days. These holy days, or appointed times, are described in Leviticus 23, as well as many other verses throughout the Tanakh, or Old Testament, and the New Testament.

Although the anniversary of when I believe I quit being a Christian is in the spring just before Passover, every time I observe one of the biblical appointed times, I am reminded with each Feast Day once again what an important and correct decision I made when I quit being a Christian.

To explain what I mean and why I quit being a Christian, let me share a little history. I was raised in a Jewish family (according to , I am 100% Eastern European Jewish). I grew up going to synagogue every Shabbat. I attended Hebrew school. I had my Bar Mitzvah, and after my Bar Mitzvah, I helped to chant the liturgy each week during services. My family observed the biblical holy days: Passover, Shavuot, Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippur and Sukkot.

We planted trees on Tu B'Shevat, ate Hamantaschen on Purim and played dreidel on Hanukkah. Judaism wasn't just our religion; Judaism was our life. It was not what we were, it was who we were. Shortly after my Bar Mitzvah, I started having questions about Judaism. I wasn't questioning G-D or the Bible; I was questioning some of the ideas, teachings and understandings of

Judaism. The more I studied the Tanakh for myself, the more inconsistency I found between what was in the Bible and what I found in the modern practices of Judaism.

This blog would become too long if I was to make a list here. But the largest inconsistency had to do with how we received atonement for our sins.

My studies caused me to search for a belief system that was consistent with the Bible in how we as Jews received atonement. I found the answer to this question in Christianity and the sacrificial atoning death of Yeshua. I became a Christian, and in Christianity, I found the answers to many of my questions.

For a number of years, I was fully satisfied with what I believed and how I was living as a Christian. I became a pastor of a small church in rural Alabama and was comfortable in where my faith had brought me. Until one day while I was praying, I heard a voice, which I knew was G-D speaking to me, as clear as if someone were standing right next to me, speak these words: "You are a Jew; live like one." I arose from prayer, shaken and concerned. What did this mean? I went and told my wife about the voice I heard and she said, "OK, but what does that mean?"

This was just before Passover, so we announced to our congregation that we would be hosting a Passover Seder and invited all of them to attend. We also announced that we would be adding a Friday evening Shabbat service to our weekly schedule of services.

I have to be honest and tell you that these changes were not entirely received with enthusiasm by our small rural congregation. Church members began to ask all of the "why" questions. It was only a few months later that we found out about a Messianic Synagogue in Mobile about an hour and a half from our town and began to attend services there on Friday

evenings while we continued to have Sunday services at our church. Approximately six months later, my family moved to Mobile and became part of that synagogue.

Over the next few years, my lifestyle became more and more “Jewish,” and I became less and less a “Christian.” This didn’t mean that I forsook my belief in Yeshua as Messiah—not at all. Actually, my increased connection to the Judaism that was passed down from generation to generation also increased my belief that Yeshua is the Messiah.

My decision to quit being a Christian has resulted in some people calling me a “Judaizer,” which is untrue because it is not now nor was it ever my intention to make Jews of non-Jewish people. I have been accused of trying to obey the Law or Torah to be saved, which is also untrue because I absolutely, positively, totally and completely believe that our salvation is the result of the atonement provided by Yeshua. I have been accused of “doing Jewish stuff” to manipulate and deceive Jewish people into believing that Yeshua is the Messiah. This also is untrue, as I do the things I do because I am Jewish, not to influence other Jews in any way.

So you may ask why then I quit being a Christian. The answer is simple: I quit being a Christian because Yeshua is the Messiah. Let me explain a little further. Everyone who is a born-again believer in Yeshua has entered a covenant with G-D—in this case, the New Covenant. However, the New Covenant is not the first covenant G-D made with humanity; there were many covenants made with people, beginning with the Adamic Covenant we find in the book of Genesis. These covenants are eternal promises made by G-D with His people and G-D will not, in fact, cannot break a covenant which He has made. In Galatians 3, beginning with verse 15, we read:

“Brothers and sisters, I speak in human terms: even with a man’s covenant, once it has been confirmed, no one cancels it

or adds to it. Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. It doesn't say, 'and to seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'and to your seed,' who is the Messiah. What I am saying is this: Torah, which came 430 years later, does not cancel the covenant previously confirmed by God, so as to make the promise ineffective" (Gal. 3:15-19, TLV).

Notice that we are taught that a new covenant does not cancel a previous covenant. If G-D could break a covenant that He made, He would become a liar and cease to be G-D because G-D cannot lie. So, what does this have to do with my quitting being a Christian? I quit being a Christian and returned to biblical Judaism because the existence of biblical Judaism, a Judaism that holds to both the covenant of Moses and belief in the New Covenant, established the foundation upon which a non-Jewish Christian can stand with full assurance that G-D's covenants are true.

So this week as I gather in synagogue on Yom Teruah and hear the sound of the shofar's call 100 times and recite liturgical prayers that have been said for thousands of years, I am not doing so to prove that I am Jewish, nor am I doing so because I no longer believe in Yeshua (because I believe more each day).

I am holding onto my Judaism because my covenantal Judaism proves that G-D is faithful to His covenants, which proves that Christians can trust in the New Covenant. The bottom line is: I quit being a Christian so more people could have faith in the New Testament. {eoa}

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