

Moses vs. Yeshua—Law vs. Life

Whenever I met a rabbi as a new believer, I would ask him, “Do you *know* God?” Most would say something like, “You can’t really know God, but you can know *about* Him.” I always answered honestly, “Well, I know God; until you can offer me as much, I am not interested!”

Another rabbi once told a girl who asked him how to know God to “Read more. Read the Torah and the Talmud.” That was it. And yes, reading the Scripture can bring us closer to God, but that is only if we are reading it *devotionally*, not merely to *gain knowledge*. We read God’s word because we seek deeper intimacy with Him.

And this is the primary difference between Messianic Judaism and Modern Rabbinic Judaism—the issue of relationship. In Yeshua, I have met God. It’s not a case of merely reading *about* Him, or of observing traditions that are remotely *connected* to Him—but actually *knowing* Him!

Messianic Jews enjoy the presence of God, whereas Orthodox Jews have a religion of *things they must do*. Many of those things are beautiful and meaningful; many, however, are tedious and rote. But all they accomplish, and this is true of religion in general, from Islam to Catholicism, is to make the observer of these traditions and codes of behavior feel good about him or herself.

They mistake the self-satisfaction and pride that comes from keeping a list of rules, for God’s approval. Most religions focus on *what you must do*, not realizing that there is, in fact, *nothing you can do* to earn God’s forgiveness—we are all sinners. Salvation is a free gift God offers each one of us through Yeshua alone.

“For the wages of sin is death, but the (FREE) gift of God is eternal life through Yeshua, our Messiah and Lord.” (Rom.

6:23)

Bible Heroes and God

We do not see the great men such as Abraham, Moses, Joshua, or King David consumed with traditions and ordinances, do we? They were consumed with God Himself. Abraham was called *the friend of God* (Isaiah 41:8, 2 Chronicles 20:7) and Moses pleaded with God for His presence.

Then Moses said to him, *"If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here..."* And the LORD said to Moses, *"I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name."* Then Moses said, *"Now show me your glory."* (Exodus 33:17-18)

We read in Joshua over and over again: *"And the Lord said to Joshua..."* Joshua communed with God. Of King David, it was said, *"he was a man after God's own heart"* (1 Samuel 13:14). His passion was not endless rote tradition, but *God himself*. Psalm 27 states it beautifully as David cries out to the Lord:

"One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple." (Ps. 27:45)

Modern Judaism vs. Bible Judaism

How very different modern-day Rabbinic Judaism is from the Judaism of the Bible! Modern-day Judaism cannot give you a relationship with God; it can only give you information about Him and a list of *mitzvot* (good deeds) to perform.

Ask your rabbi if he has the presence of God in his life. Ask him if he has a living, personal relationship with God.

Moses/Law and Yehoshua/God is Salvation

Rabbinic Judaism emphasizes the Law—Moses. In fact, the word

Moses is synonymous with the Torah. Could it be that the fact that Moses could not lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land was God saying that the Law cannot save you? Yes, I know Moses was punished for striking the rock twice, but still, was God seeking to communicate a powerful truth?

How amazing that the one who did lead them across the Jordan River into the Promised Land was named Yehoshua (Joshua), which is the long form of Jesus' Hebrew name, Yeshua. Moses (the Law) could only see the Promised Land, but Yehoshua, (which means *God is Salvation*) was to possess it.

Is the Torah Bad?

To be clear, *the Torah is not bad* (Rom. 7:12), it just can't produce life (Gal. 3:21). It can point to life (Gal. 3:24), just as Moses was able to climb Mount Nebo and see the Promised Land.

"Therefore, you (Moses) will see the land only from a distance; you will not enter the land I am giving to the people of Israel." (Deut. 32:52)

But what the Law could not do, the sacrifice of Yeshua has accomplished. Through the New Covenant (Brit Hadashah) He made a way for you to individually enter into a vibrant, powerful relationship with God, Himself. Through Moses God is revealed—you can see Him; through Yeshua, you can know Him.

The Law points to righteousness, but stops short of being able to change you; Yeshua, however, empowers you with righteousness and enables you to live a new life. Just as the Prophet Ezekiel predicted concerning the Jewish people in the end times.

"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a

heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.” (Ez. 36:25-27)

Jeremiah said that this will be the mark of the New Covenant, the feature that differentiates it from the Old Covenant—that the Torah would not be merely something read on tablets of stone, but on the hearts of men.

“This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.” (Jer. 31:31)

The main point: God isn't looking for people to simply follow rules and tradition, but to know Him. Do you want to know Him? Or is mere religion enough for you?

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