

'Rabbi' Messer Crowns Eddie Long King: A Messianic Response

Note: I am reluctantly writing this blog. After I initially saw this video, I felt it wasn't even worth commenting on. However, it appears that in just a few hours this video has gone viral and affected not just the body of believers, but the Jewish world as well. As a Messianic Jew, I feel compelled to make it clear both to the Church world and the Jewish community that this man is not a part of mainstream Messianic Judaism.

Just days after I wrote an article about unity, saying that the only time we should publicly call out ministers is in cases of moral failure, **false teaching** and apostasy, I find myself needing to do just that.

When I saw the YouTube video of **self-proclaimed Messianic Rabbi Ralph Messer** declaring the soon-to-be divorced and accused pedophile Eddie Long (Long settled out of court for a reported \$15,000,000), to be a king, I felt sick to my stomach. I sat there stunned, as this man desecrated a Torah scroll, one that survived the Holocaust no less (if he is to be believed) and committed one of the most offensive acts toward Jews by a so-called believer that I have seen in my lifetime.

In the video ([click here to watch](#)) Messer spews out a number of, what I believe to be, myths that the unsuspecting crowd has no reason to doubt.

- **The covering or mantle of the Torah is called the Foreskin—FALSE:** Not only is this disgusting, it is not true. No Jewish organization refers to the Torah covering in this way.

- **A brand new scroll starts at \$60,000–FALSE:** A Torah can be purchased at \$20,000. \$60,000 would be the most, not the least someone would pay.
- **Thirty-nine lambskins are used to make a Torah–FALSE:** As many as 80 skins are used, depending on the need. And more often than not, they use cows, not lambs—more real estate on a cow.
- **Thirty-nine seams (a seam is one piece of skin in which 3 or 4 columns of text appear) are in a Torah (seeking to make a connection to Yeshua's flogging)–FALSE:** Between 62 and 84 seams are needed.
- **Jews touch the Torah with their finger–FALSE:** Because of the oils on the fingers and the sanctity of the Torah, a special pointing device called a Yad (Hebrew for hand, not finger) is used to read the Torah.
- **90 percent of Jews in the world have never seen, come close to or touched a [Torah] scroll–RIDICULOUSLY FALSE:** Every girl or boy who has a Bar or Bat mitzvah reads directly from a Torah scroll, not to mention that a Torah is marched throughout a synagogue every week for every person to touch (the outer covering, not the parchment).
- **Only one of great authority can read from the Torah–FALSE:** Again, tens of thousands of Jewish boys and girls read from the Torah every year during their Bar and Bat Mitzvahs and they do not possess great authority. In addition, anyone from the congregation may be invited to read from the Torah throughout the year.
- **It takes three and half years to write a Torah scroll (seeking to make a connection between Yeshua's three and a half years of ministry)–FALSE:** It actually takes about one year or 2,000 hours. Someone working just over 6 hours a day would finish the scroll in year or so.
- **Torahs are only given to cities that need to be released into a new anointing–UNBELIEVABLY FALSE:** Almost every synagogue and Messianic synagogue in every city has a Torah scroll. There is no scriptural precedent for

this—zero. Then Messer, based on his Israeli citizenship (assuming he really has it) and his Jewishness (assuming he is really Jewish), gives the Torah on behalf of the Jewish people to Eddie Long, most of who would cringe at his utter disregard for the Torah scroll. In order to give something to someone on behalf of others, you must be sent out as a representative. An ambassador might give something on behalf of his nation. But someone who not only does not represent the Jewish people, but doesn't represent the Messianic community, has zero apostolic authority to make such a pronouncement—at least in my understanding of authority. Rabbi David Shiff, a legitimate Messianic leader in Atlanta, said, "Ralph Messer in no way represents Messianic Judaism. He is not affiliated with any legitimate branch of Messianic Judaism. His actions in no way reflect the position of Messianic Judaism. I found the presentation to be repulsive and inappropriate."

- **Messer claims that the kings of Israel were physically wrapped in the Torah—FALSE:** There is no text in the Hebrew Scriptures that speak to this.

The idea that New Testament leaders are exalted as kings goes against the biblical portrayal of New Testament leaders as servants. Yeshua, who is a king, bent down to wash the feet of his disciples. He who wants to be great must become the very least.

He claims that after the king goes through the ceremony he cannot be attacked and he is hidden in the **Word of God**. Any believer can take hold of God's Word, not just kings who go through special made-up ceremonies.

Next a woman brings a Tallit (**prayer shawl**), allowing it to drag on the floor. In Judaism not only would one go to great lengths to keep a Tallit from touching the floor, it is only worn by Jewish men who have been Bar Mitzvahed. Placing one on a non-Jew, and then declaring him a Jewish priest (Kohen) and

a king, will only serve to offend the Jewish people and make us look like fools.

Messer then declares that Long is a king. If I put all my reservations aside about anyone being called a King (apart from the idea that we are all kings and priests) and just focus on the fact that **Eddie Long** just settled out of court four lawsuits from young men who said he coerced them into having underage sex with him. I would conclude that there is probably a more qualified candidate for the position. I am sure there are many fine leaders in Atlanta whose marriages are intact and have not been accused of sexual crimes. Why Long? I would think that someone whose wife has just left him would be seeking counseling, not coronation.

This was not the first time Ralph Messer showed up to support an embattled bishop. When a **megachurch** pastor and his wife decided to get divorced in 2007, Messer was there to affirm the pastor. In a situation where most pastors would be inclined to at least take a break from ministry, as having your home in order is a qualification for eldership, Messer encouraged this pastor 'prophetically' (who resigned not long afterwards due to health concerns) to keep going.

On the day that this leader announced that he and his wife were splitting, Messer took a Tallit and placed it over the soon-to-be-divorced pastor and said, "I declare today that my bishop has entered into a new season, a **new season**, a new season." While technically I guess that was true—he was entering a new season—Messer meant it as an affirmation of his ministry.

I don't know Ralph Messer and it is not my place to judge the motives of his heart, but I do find it troubling that he is doing these acts while claiming to be a Messianic rabbi. His actions reflect poorly on the Messianic community who is seeking to be a positive witness to the fact that you can be Jewish and believe in Yeshua.

While it is not my place to declare him a false prophet or a false teacher, I feel confident saying that which I witnessed in the YouTube video was false teaching and false prophecy, at least in my opinion.

Messianic Jews have spent the last half-century contending for the Messianic faith and in one day, a YouTube video that has gone viral, is seeking to discredit us. Let's pray that somehow God will turn this for good and that Messianic Jews will have an opportunity to share the true Messianic faith.

Without a doubt someone will read this and say, "Ron, **God is merciful**. He can forgive Eddie Long." Friends, I agree. However this is not an issue of mercy or forgiveness, but holding up biblical standards for leadership. Leadership is a privilege, not a right. Long receiving **forgiveness** is one thing. Being declared a king in front of millions of people is another.

Too often, fallen leaders are indignant at being disqualified. Of course they can be restored to God, but it takes time before they will be ready to lead again and more importantly, before the people of God will be ready to trust them again.

And speaking of mercy, my heart immediately goes to the alleged victims of Bishop Long. I cannot imagine how they felt seeing the man who (allegedly) coerced them into homosexual relations, being honored as a king.

As far as Messer is concerned, anyone who has a habit of showing on the doorstep of disgraced ministers with huge platforms, worries me. However this time it appears his folly may have caught up with him. Despite the overwhelming support he received during the service from the crowd who assumed that he was speaking truth, his actions have been condemned by the Messianic community and many in the African-American community.

As I said, I reluctantly wrote this because I don't think that

one should publicly rebuke someone lightly. However I am at peace with my words; this needed to be confronted. I am sure that many others, smarter and more eloquent than myself, will feel the need to do the same.

Ron Cantor heads the *Isaiah 2 Initiative*, an Israeli-based vision to see the good news go forth from Zion. In 2009 and 2010 I2I took Israelis to Ukraine and Africa where the gospel went forth to tens of thousands of people with signs and wonders.