

Ron Cantor: Messianic Jews Are the Most Hated People on Earth

Though the first community of believers were virtually all Jewish, as the Messianic Faith spread amongst the Gentiles, the Church went to great lengths to keep Jewish believers from living as Jews and to remove all vestiges of Jewish practice from Christianity. Was this a demonic conspiracy or just political expediency for the kings and popes of the Middle Ages?

Without a doubt both, but that doesn't change the fact that they altered the nature and identity of the New Covenant, and even of the Messiah. Yeshua, the Judean, was transfigured by the Church into a blond-haired, blue-eyed 'anything-but-Jewish' man. Yes, the Son of God, the Creator of the Universe, Himself, became the victim of identity theft!

Israel's long awaited Messiah, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the King of the Jews was robbed of His Jewishness. His identity was not merely disguised, the Church changed it altogether. If it were possible for the Son of God to have slept from 30 CE until the end of the Middle Ages, He would have not have recognized Himself when He awoke. Not only were His Middle-Eastern features changed into a blonde haired, blue eyed Caucasian, but His body, the Church, hardly resembled the beautiful picture of a community compelled by His love to reach the world with His message that we see in the Book of Acts.

The Jewish Roots of the New Covenant were deleted. Once comprised almost exclusively of Jews, the now Gentile-dominated Church persecuted Yeshua's natural brothers without mercy.

Even today, with such ready access to the Bible, with more iPads and printing presses to provide every version and commentary where anyone can freely read Romans 11 and Acts 15, there still remain those who believe that Jewish believers should disconnect and separate from their Jewish roots. There are people, both Jewish and Christian, who would prefer that I simply confess I have left Judaism and converted to Christianity.

Recently I had the pleasure of meeting Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, an Orthodox rabbi who has written twenty-one books, the latest being *Kosher Jesus*. He publically debates my close friend and mentor, Dr. Michael Brown, on the subject of Yeshua's messiahship. Boteach is an effective communicator with an extremely confident personality. One of the first things he asked me was, "When did you convert to Christianity?" to which I replied, "You mean, when did I become a Messianic Jew?"

Later in the evening he made a similar comment referring to me as a Christian and again I corrected him, explaining that I am a Jewish follower of the Messiah. Just as he made it a point *not* to use correct terminology, seeking to emphasize his belief that I left Judaism (I assume), it was important for me to correct him.

It is conceivable that even my readers are thinking, "Ron, what is the big deal? Just say you left Judaism for Christianity!" For me, that is impossible. My stand on this angers and confuses many people, Christian and Jewish alike. In fact, it seems to me *that* Messianic Jews may actually be the most hated, misunderstood people on earth! Think about it:

- We belong to the most hated ethnic group in history.
- We are believers in Yeshua—and increasingly today anyone who believes in the Bible and the principles therein are being classified as fanatics and bigots. The non-Messianic Jewish community is being poisoned against

us—teaching their children that we desire to destroy Judaism, which is ludicrous.

- Much of the Christian community sees us as Judaizers (Gal. 3), trying to bring believers back under the Law (which, of course, is also ludicrous).
- Many Christian leaders who believe we are legitimate, often distance themselves from the Messianic community for fear of offending other Jewish people, particularly Israeli government officials.

The larger Jewish community rejects us for our belief in Yeshua. The larger Christian world rejects us because they misunderstand us. They wrongly assume that because we remain Jewish that we look to the Torah for salvation.

On the contrary, it is the Torah which revealed to us our deep need for a Savior—for Yeshua. Others feel that because we worship on Shabbat and seek to live a Jewish life, that we think we are superior to our Gentile brothers in the faith. I can only speak for myself, but as far as I am concerned, we are *one in* Messiah, Jew and Gentile. Ephesians calls it the One New Man.

The oft-quoted Scripture, “There is neither Jew nor Gentile...in Messiah Yeshua,” (Gal. 3:28) is largely taken out of context. They forget the text continues: “neither is there male nor female.” Clearly, after coming to faith we still have gender identities. Just as a man can’t have a baby, *because he is not a woman*, so too there are distinctions in callings between the Jewish people and the nations.

The point of this passage is definitely not saying that the Jewish people no longer exist as a uniquely called nation under God. Romans 11:29 clearly states, “for God’s gifts and his call [to Israel] are irrevocable.” The two passages are not at odds. The first speaks of relationship, the ability to approach God and to know Him, while the latter speaks of *calling*—something determined by God alone.

When it comes to relating to God as Father, no one has special access because of their race, ethnicity, gender or social status—we are all created by God and become “children of God” through faith in Yeshua (Galatians 3:27) for “God does not show partiality” (Romans 2:11). Through the blood of Yeshua, all who desire to—Jew, Gentile, male, female, slave or free—can “approach God’s throne of grace with confidence.” (Heb. 4:16)

But when it comes to the matter of *calling*, it is God Who calls. We do not choose. I did not choose to be Jewish. And while it seems to be in vogue today for believers to want to be Jewish, history reveals that this has not always been the case. There were not many Christians running around Nazi-controlled Europe, for example, declaring, I am a true Jew—part of spiritual Israel!

And while many of us are familiar with the famous story of Casper Ten Boom, the Dutch Christian, who in Gestapo controlled Holland, stood in line with his Jewish neighbors in order to receive the yellow Star of David, we must admit that his story is famous precisely because so few followed his rare example. Not many Gentiles were arguing with Hitler, “We are the true Jews!”

In maintaining my Jewish identity, I don’t take pride. I understand that it could cost me my life at any time. We are witnessing a current resurgence of anti-Semitism all over the world and no one knows exactly where it will lead. The mere fact of living in a country surrounded by oil-rich Arab nations who want to destroy us gives one cause for concern.

To the east, the leader of one of the more powerful nations in the region calls regularly for our annihilation. Turkey, formerly a close ally, has just recalled their ambassador. The newly liberated Egyptians, fresh from their Arab Spring uprising, recently ransacked the Israeli embassy in Cairo and beat a security guard (Everyone else had fled or they would

have faced a similar or worse fate.)

In their first parliamentary elections, they used their new freedom, not to push democracy forward—Islamic parties won over seventy percent! And now they also elected a radical president. A former Parliament member and professor of political science in Egypt recently declared in Tehran that he didn't expect Israel to be around in a year—Allah willing.

No, being a Jew is not easy and it's even harder to be a *Messianic Jew*.

Recently 1,000 ultra-Orthodox Jews held a demonstration outside a Messianic congregation in Ashdod, Israel, where they likened Messianic Jews to Hitler—actually the rabbi was screaming that we are worse than Hitler.

Several years ago, an ultra-Orthodox terrorist nearly succeeded in killing Amiel Ortiz, the 15-year-old son of a Messianic leader, by planting a homemade bomb at his door. Only through what doctors called “a series of miracles” is that young man alive and well today. Yet, amazingly, when Israel released over 1,000 Palestinian criminals and terrorists in exchange for Gilad Shalit, an Israeli soldier who had been taken captive and held hostage for several years, some ultra-Orthodox politicians devised a petition asking for the release of Jews who had attacked Palestinians—a list that reportedly included Jack Teitel, Amiel's would-be killer.

A dear friend of mine, Eitan Shishkoff, the leader of congregation Tents of Mercy in Haifa, has experienced these types of attacks first hand. On October 21, 1997, anti-Messianic Orthodox Jews firebombed their congregational building and warehouse, burning it to the ground.

I have raised my children here and at times I have been terrified. After Amiel was attacked, a friend called me and said, “They are expecting more attacks!” A shiver of fear went up my spine as I remembered that just a few days prior, a

woman had come to my door. She was with Yad Lachim, a group which works tirelessly to keep Jews from finding the Messiah. I told her that I would not give her money because I am *one of them!* A Messianic Jew! I thought, My goodness, what if she tells? What if they attack my children? I found comfort in knowing that the Lord can protect us, but still, if I just moved back to the U.S., I would never have to even think of dealing with such fears.

Getting Personal

So why don't I just blend into the larger Christian world where it is safe? Why have I continued to identify myself as a Jewish person after coming to Yeshua? Why am I living in Israel? Why not just assimilate into the established Christian community?

Believe me, I wanted to.

For years I railed against my Messianic calling. Having been raised Jewish, attending synagogue had not been a life-giving experience for me. Culturally I loved being Jewish, but religion was another matter. Some people experience amazing fulfillment and satisfaction through the endless traditions in Judaism; I just found them boring. So when I came to Yeshua, I had no desire to incorporate rabbinic or traditional Judaism into my new faith. In fact, after graduating from Bible school, my goal was to be an American evangelist who just happened to be Jewish.

The turning point for me took place in 1998. Elana and I were planning to spend a year in Odessa, Ukraine, joining the faculty of their new Messianic Jewish Bible Institute and training new Jewish believers for ministry. However, a few months before we would leave, I received a phone call from my long-time friend, Dr. Michael Brown. He was leading the most exciting Bible School in the country. It had been birthed out of the Brownsville Revival in Pensacola, Florida. Over the

course of five years, millions of people had passed through the Brownsville Assembly of God with many relating life-changing encounters with God.

As a result the school was full of on-fire young people. When Dr. Brown asked me to come and join his faculty, it was like a dream. I was being offered the opportunity to serve in one of the most powerful revivals in American history. For several days I ignored the voice of God. I did not want to even ask Him what His will was, because in my heart I knew He was sending us, not to the sunny beaches of Pensacola, Florida, where there was an awesome outpouring of His Spirit, but to the icy streets of Odessa, Ukraine to reach Jewish people.

Finally I submitted to God's will and told Dr. Brown that the timing was not right. It was killing me! Oh, this Jewish calling, I would think. I was depressed.

Several months later, Dr. Brown was coming to Gaithersburg and I was going to pick him up at the airport. The night before, I thought to myself, When he gets here, I will explain to him that my heart is with the revival and that is where I truly want to be, but that I'm stuck with this "Jewish calling."

That night, however, I had a dream. I was sitting in a cafe next to a very striking woman. There was an intense attraction between us. We wanted to be together. In the midst of this intense desire, I looked at her and pointed to my wedding ring, explaining that no matter how badly we wanted to be together, I was committed to my marriage. Then I awoke—and to be honest, I felt kind of gross. I didn't know that the dream was from the Lord.

Later that day, around 4 p.m., I sensed the Lord saying to me that the dream had a spiritual meaning. "You have been lusting after a different calling with an adulterous spirit. I have called you to love your Jewish calling the way you love your wife."

Wow! That was a major turning point in my life. God was not asking me to *tolerate* my birthright but to *love it*—to honor it. That was all I needed.

Ron Cantor is the director and founder of **Messiah's Mandate International** in Israel, a Messianic Ministry dedicated to taking the message of Jesus from Israel to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). In addition, MMI serves as an international teaching ministry to the believing community worldwide, teaching on the Jewish Roots of the faith.

For the original article, visit [.](#)