

Understanding the Hebraic Roots of Our Faith

Beloved, the apostle Paul, the author of most of the New Testament, was born a Jew, continued to live as a Jew even after his conversion and died as a Jew. Paul never lost his Jewish identity, and he never stopped living as a Jewish person. In fact, he celebrated the Jewish feasts just as his fellow countrymen did.

“We sailed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and came to them at Troas within five days; and there we stayed seven days.” Acts 20:6

“For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be in Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost” (Acts 20:16, NKJV).

In the verse above, Paul was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem so he could celebrate Shavuot (Pentecost)—as he had been doing his entire life. Although he was not under the Law (as we are not under the Law), he still saw the beauty and personality of God that was revealed in the Law.

This is what Jesus said in regard to the Law:

“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others *to do* the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:17-19, NASB 1995).

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Again, although we are not under the Law, there is great value in understanding it in order to better know God.

Let's look at how Paul described himself:

"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city [Jerusalem], educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the Law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today" (Acts 22:3).

Gamaliel was actually Paul's grandfather and one of the leading scholars of Judaism in his day. Thus, Paul was personally tutored in all things Judaic under the foremost Jewish teacher in his homeland.

Beloved, are you starting to see how Jewish and how Hebrew the New Testament really is? And if we are going to comprehend it properly and receive the entire revelation it contains, we will need to view the New Testament through a Hebraic lens.

But unfortunately, the enemy has effectively blinded the church from its true Judaic roots. Many read the New Testament through the filter of their own eyes without understanding the original intent or worldview of the one who wrote it. Sadly, much of the Gentile Church does not see the Hebraic nature of the New Testament.

When Paul wrote, he very much saw his books as Jewish writings, and he definitely had a Jewish heart.

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To give you an example of this, let us consider the book of Romans. Many theologians and pastors use Romans as a doctrinal treatise for how to get saved. Indeed, the book of Romans is

the most theologically comprehensive epistle that Paul wrote. However, when Paul wrote Romans, he was not just talking about how one gets saved, but in the deepest part of his heart, he had in mind the people of Israel.

Consider these verses:

“I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, *separated* from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh” (Rom. 9:1-3).

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for *their* [Israel’s] salvation” (Rom. 10:1).

“I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin” (Rom. 11:1).

Romans 9, 10 and 11 are all about the salvation of Israel. Paul, as a Jew himself, carried great convictions in regard to his homeland: Israel. There is no doubt that Paul’s identity as a Jew had great impact and influence over his writing.

Beloved, I believe your experiences in studying the New Testament will be deeply enriched, and supernatural revelation will flow, as you begin to immerse yourself in the Jewishness of the New Testament.

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