

Messianic Rabbi: Why We Almost Stopped Reading the Psalms in Our Synagogue

After much prayer, study and consideration, as a Rabbi who is responsible for what the souls in my synagogue are influenced by, I recently decided that we must ban the reading or reciting of the Psalms in our Messianic synagogue as a part of our service. The reason for this decision is that the Psalms, while beautiful and inspirational, were written largely by a sex trafficking rapist and murderer and the sons of a rebellion's fallen religious leader.

That's right – the majority of the Psalms were written by King David, while others were written by the Sons of Korach.

Just so you know, we will not be banning the *books* from the Bible that share the stories of David's life or the chapters that tell us about Korach and his rebellion because those are history books. But we have made the choice to stop reading and reciting the Psalms publicly. After all, we do not want our congregation to believe we support the actions of those who wrote the Psalms.

I know that some of you who are reading this are questioning the sanity of my position, **while others have already reached the conclusion that the truth is that I didn't really make the decision to ban the Psalms from our synagogue services.** Some of you may jump to the conclusion that I am writing this today in response to the news that leaders of several large churches with well-known singing ministries have fallen into sin.

The truth is that I have almost no knowledge of any of the pastors or leaders of these megachurches because I rarely watch Christian television or follow Christian ministries. It was only after I was asked by another Messianic rabbi about

whether our synagogue should use music written by a Jewish cantor about whom it was revealed to have lived an unbiblical lifestyle that I began to pray about this topic.

After prayer, here is a list of my considerations in choosing songs that we will use in our synagogue worship services. Of course, you are totally welcome to disagree if you choose.

1. Does the song lead us to worship the Creator or the creation?
2. Is the song consistent with what the Bible teaches?

You will notice that I didn't list who wrote the song or what ministry they are associated with; that is because, in general, neither the songwriter nor the ministry they belong to will be singing at my synagogue. It is also because I know that G-D can take something written by a broken and sinful person and anoint it to be sung to touch the hearts of other broken and sinful people.

When I was a brand-new believer in Yeshua as my Messiah, I was given a record album (yes, it was that long ago) by a well-known Christian singer. I played that album so many times that I wore it out. I learned every word, and as I would sing each song with joy in my heart, I felt the power and love of G-D surrounding me.

Just a few months afterwards, the news broke that this singer had been busted for cocaine and had been fighting addiction for many years. It turns out that those songs that blessed me so much were written by a singer-songwriter that was addicted to cocaine when he wrote and recorded those songs. I was brokenhearted and hurt until I realized that G-D's Spirit isn't limited to anointing the writer or singer of a song. G-D's Spirit can and does anoint and fill the hearts of the hearers.

Just think about it this way. What if your congregation's worship team was singing a song that was written by a

righteous person that glorified G-D and was consistent with the teachings of the Bible, but a member, or your whole worship team for that matter, had sinned that morning? Would G-D still be able to bless your congregation during that worship service?

Please don't read this as if I am excusing or making light of anybody's sins. I am not; it is my prayer that every sinner comes to immediate and complete repentance before G-D.

However, I also know that the Bible is filled with fallen people that G-D used to bless other people. I also know that if you and I are honest with ourselves, and if G-D could only use the parts of our lives where we walked perfectly righteous before Him to bless others ... well, I don't think I need to finish that sentence. {eoa}

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